RELIGIOUS EDUCATION IN THE SENIOR SCHOOL

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Religious Education in the Senior School

by

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"Scouting in the Service of the Church," etc.

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INTRODUCTION

This is essentially a book of method, and includes accounts of current practice, sample schemes of work, and notes on experiments that have been found successful in a variety of post-primary schools, and with various grades of children. The requirements of B and C stream pupils, no less than those of the A stream, have been kept in mind throughout the book. Students and young teachers should be able to find practical suggestions here for their lessons, and experienced teachers might use the book as a kind of refresher course.

To be really successful Religious Instruction must be more than the imparting of knowledge : it must reveal the inspirational riches of the Bible story and give direct training in public worship and in service to the community. It is in this light that Religious Instruction is regarded in this book.

Many schools to-day are using a Syllabus of Religious Instruction approved by their Local Education Authority, and it will be found that the methods suggested here are applicable to any such syllabus. A chapter on the making of a syllabus is given for those teachers who wish to draw up their own schemes.

There is urgent need for research into the methods of teaching Religious Knowledge ; and this book is published in the hope that whilst helping teachers to re-examine their own methods, it will encourage them to experiment for themselves, as in that way alone can progress be made.

R. L. A.

TO MY FATHER
AND BEST FRIEND

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RELIGIOUS EDUCATION IN THE SENIOR SCHOOL

CHAPTER I

THE AIM OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION IN SCHOOLS

IT is becoming more and more apparent to any thinking man or woman that the world is swayed by the rival ideologies of Totalitarianism and Christianity, each claiming for itself the inspiration that can guide men and nations towards the millennium. Totalitarianism is in practice essentially non-democratic, insisting as it does upon the subservience of the individual to the State, whilst Christianity, because it stresses the freedom of the individual, is the real bulwark of democracy. The one hope for humanity is a planned Christian democracy.

The introduction to the *Cambridgeshire Syllabus of Religious Teaching for Schools* (1924 edition) says, "Only by Christian education can the modern world be saved from an abyss of which no man can see the bottom . . . the main battle in front of us will be fought in the ordinary schools of the country."

This is only partially true, for no school can provide all the religious teaching and training required by a boy or girl. The teaching of the school must be allied with that of the church. If religious education is to become the dynamic force that will drive men to carry out the Divine Purpose, it must be the joint concern of all—the school, the church, and the home. Whilst it is not within the scope of this book to discuss the teaching methods adopted by the churches in the education of their young people, it must be realized that until and unless these methods are founded on sound educational practice, until there is close co-operation between all types of schools and the churches, and until both are supplementing each other's teaching, neither can be fully effective.

More and more conferences and discussions between teachers and clergy are required in order to bring this about. Teachers realize that though they are experts in the technique of teaching, they are often inadequately equipped with knowledge of the content of Religious Instruction. The clergy could help to redress the balance, and the teachers in return could lend valuable aid in the reorganization of the Sunday schools. It is no part of the duty of the clergy to "supervise" the work of another profession, nor can the teachers be expected to run the Sunday schools. If both were prepared to act as "consultants" in their respective spheres, valuable co-operation could be secured.

However, this book is chiefly concerned with Religious Instruction in the Senior School, and the following principles are suggested as basic :

(1) *The teaching must be in accordance with good modern educational theory and practice.*—Too often methods are used in Religious Instruction which would be condemned if used in any other subject of the curriculum, and the children become bored not so much by the material as by the method of its presentation. It is still far too common to see children reading "round the class," each child reading a verse in turn, or to hear them languidly learning a portion of scripture, the meaning of which they do not understand, and have not had explained to them. Though the simple telling of the Bible stories may be adequate in the Infant and Junior Schools, it is quite insufficient in the Senior School, for there the children are beginning to ask questions, and their natural inquisitiveness must be taken into account.

Senior School children of 13–14 years of age are now taught to work in groups or individually, and in many schools excellent results of this work may be observed in such subjects as History, Geography, and Science. Rarely is this modified Dalton method applied to the teaching of Religious Knowledge.

Older people who doubt the authenticity of the Bible narrative often do so because of their lack of knowledge of its historical, geographical, and social setting. This lack of understanding is very common, and its results are often seen even

in children of Senior School age. Also one hears people say that no educated person could possibly believe in such stories as those of Creation, the Flood, or the Walls of Jericho, when their disbelief would probably be dissipated if they had acquaintance with modern Biblical criticism. Other people to-day are sceptics because of lack of training in the basic Biblical truths. Senior children hear their elders criticise the Bible, and then they echo the criticism. If the teacher is content to leave these negative attitudes implicit, and does not deal explicitly with the problems at issue, the children may leave school feeling that there is no sensible solution to their difficulties, and that the teacher is afraid to discuss them. Children should rather be encouraged to state their difficulties, and then the teacher, by providing the relevant geographical, historical, and social facts, or by other means, would often be able to dispel the doubts. Taught thus undogmatically, the stories of the Creation, the Flood, and the Walls of Jericho will be readily understood and appreciated.

The *Cambridge Syllabus* sums up the whole method of Bible teaching when it says, " Use the Bible with the zest and caution of reason, as a varied literature in which one Holy Spirit speaks, half-expressed, a little thwarted by a multitude of minds through which it breathes—that is what inspiration means—and it proves itself a safe guide towards all truth and love and life."

(2) *The teaching should be inspirational.*—Mere knowledge of the Bible, its stories, history, and teaching is not enough ; the knowledge must be translated into action. There is a danger that the teaching may become so academic as to deprive the child of his rightful heritage, an abiding faith and trust in the power of Almighty God.

One reason for the attraction of the Nazi Youth Movement was its appeal to faith and action, its creation in the mind of youth of a sense that every individual matters. Christianity is in danger of losing this appeal in the static conditions of British society, and it is the schools that must produce the new missionaries eager to follow in the steps of Ignatius Loyola, Francis of Assisi, Xavier, and such dynamic personalities.

If religious teaching is to be inspirational the following points must be borne in mind :

First, that Christianity is caught rather than taught. No matter how carefully the lessons may be prepared, no matter how well presented, if the teacher is not himself trying to live according to the highest Christian standards, the whole of his teaching will be a failure. Children very quickly detect the cheat ; they are sufficiently intelligent at this age to realize that no human being can hope to achieve perfection, but though forgiving imperfection they will not tolerate hypocrisy. They demand very little of their elders, for whilst being idealists they are also realists. Experience having already shown them much of the sham, deceit, and lying of the world around them, they readily appreciate a human being whose standards of conduct are obviously not those of the world, possibly not those of their own homes. As they are from the start the object of their pupils' hero-worship, teachers need not fear the criticism of their pupils, who will be blind to whatever imperfections they find if they can only see, in the uncanny way that children have, that their heroes are really honest in their endeavours.

Second, that children must be shown the *practical* nature of the Bible. God has a purpose for the world, and the Bible is a record of the unfolding of that purpose, using man for its instrument. Children can be shown how the Love of God, working in certain men's lives, has made heroes of them. Adolescents love a hero, and their hero-worship may be harnessed in the service of Christ by the study of the lives of great Biblical heroes like Amos, Abraham, David, Paul, Jesus. Lest they think that God's call ceased at the close of the New Testament the stories of Bible heroes should be supplemented by those of later periods such as Francis Xavier, Father Damien and Sunda Singh. Children are apt to form the idea that saints and heroes, whilst very fine to hear about, do not, and indeed cannot, exist in our modern civilization, and that they belong to history dead and gone. It is often a pleasant surprise for them to hear the stories of modern heroes like Kagawa and Somervell, and so to perceive that God is still working His purpose out.

By this hero-worshipping treatment of Religious Instruction the children may come to realize that Christianity is practical, that it is a power in the world to-day, and that it constitutes an ever-present challenge to themselves.

There is the danger, however, that a feeling may be left with the child that those "heroes" were supernatural beings endowed with special powers which he does not possess. A properly conducted study will show him, on the contrary, that they were often ignorant, sometimes sinful people, whose "heroism" was only attained by God's help and training. The stories of David, Peter, and Paul treated in this way may act as a spur to greater effort in their own lives.

(3) *The teaching must be related to the children's own experience.*—Hero-worship can be translated into action. Children of Senior School age long to be doing something, and this longing can be turned into proper channels by showing them how their scripture training can be applied in practice. Lord Baden-Powell realized this urge for action when he imposed the duty of a daily good turn, which is one of the reasons for the success of the Boy Scout movement. During the last few months, in many areas, the Youth Squad method has been very successful: bodies of young people have banded themselves together to perform specific acts of service.

The children can see for themselves many examples of faithful service being performed around them, by nurses in hospitals, by workers in slums, by Boy Scouts, by Youth Squads, and by countless others. Here then is the opportunity to suggest definite acts of service that the children can themselves perform to help either the school, their place of worship, or their homes.

Many of the Bible stories become more intelligible when explained in the light of the children's own experience. The marriage feast at Cana is typical of functions that the children may have attended; the market in the Temple Court may be compared with its modern counterpart, or the conditions in Jerusalem on feast days with those of a modern seaside resort. The Bible tells of real people, living their lives much as we live

them to-day, but with the differences imposed by time, place, and tradition.

The miracles often prove difficult to explain to children, who can appreciate them much better, however, after they have heard of the wonderful work of our surgeons to-day. Many miracles are capable of a very simple explanation, but even our modern surgeons hesitate to explain all their cures in purely medical terms ; there is still room for Faith.

(4) *Religious Education must permeate the whole of the school curriculum and every phase of school life.*—Someone has said that the name of Jesus Christ may not be mentioned in polite society, because it is simply " not done." People are so much afraid of being thought prigs that they wrap up any mention of religion in all kinds of queer parcels. One is told that a certain line of conduct is the " decent " thing, " the straight " thing, or the " sporty " thing. Why not be honest and call it the " Christian " thing ?

If Christianity is to recapture the dynamic power of its early years its followers must shed this unnatural reserve. Children in the schools should be taught that all work is God's work, that all play is God's play ; all leisure is God's leisure, and all fun God's fun. The danger of making children priggish is only real when they begin to talk about being Christian instead of acting Christianity. In any case a little good-humoured fun provides an excellent antidote.

Many schools to-day have their School Prefects and House Captains, who are excellent material for training in Christian leadership ; and surely it is possible to educate these youngsters to " witness humbly." To many people thirteen years of age may appear very young, but it is questionable if in the past our teachers and clergy have asked enough of young people. The young are idealists longing to give practical expression to their ideals, but often thwarted by the well-meaning yet mis-directed efforts of adults to " keep them young." Principal Braley remarks that " unless the school does its share in directing the child's natural impulses into proper channels there is a danger that they will find an outlet in unruly or perverse individual conduct or in undesirable forms of social behaviour."

The giving of responsibility to young leaders could become one of the most important aspects of the work of the Senior Schools, for it is at this age that such training should begin. Circular 1486 of the Board of Education, stressing the importance of youth work, has suggested the setting up by each Local Authority of a Youth Committee to be responsible for co-ordinating the work of existing youth organizations and for initiating new work. Probably the most important and the most neglected paragraph of this circular is the one stating that " young people themselves must be encouraged to find through the local Youth Committee new constructive outlets for their leisure hours and for voluntary national service." Such encouragement would amount to training in responsibility. Already the complaint is heard that the youth of to-day are apathetic, have little initiative, and do not readily respond to any form of activity demanding self-sacrifice on their part. Much of this apparent apathy is due to a stifling of initiative through lack of opportunity for leadership at an earlier age. One of the paramount Christian duties of the Senior School is to study the facilities that it can offer its pupils for social service, the development of initiative, and the practice of responsibility, so that when they leave school the training may be continued with young people who already possess a real desire to serve.

Many of the recent publications of the Board of Education, *e.g. The Handbook of Suggestions to Teachers, The Report of the Consultative Committee on the Primary School, The Education of the Adolescent*, stress the importance of religious education and of the fact that it cannot be " confined to a separate period or number of periods." Christian teaching must permeate every subject of the curriculum and be operative every moment of the school day. Each teacher should quite deliberately plan his scheme of lessons so that his pupils may be led to realize the all-pervading presence of God.

The history teacher has many opportunities for pointing this lesson. A tradition has arisen in English schools that history teaching should begin with Julius Cæsar's landing in Britain in 55 B.C., but this means the omission of essential

matters like the story of the Jewish nation and of the rise of the Christian Church, which are vitally important through their later repercussions on the whole course of European and, in modern times, of world history. The biographies of St. Francis Xavier, Ignatius Loyola, Wesley, and Livingstone need to be given equal prominence with those of Julius Cæsar, Cromwell, Napoleon, and Wellington.

The teaching of science and biology, too, may be directed to the strengthening of the pupil's realization of the wonder of the universe and the glory of God's gifts to man. The child may be taught to reverence not only his own body, but the world around him. The value of the teaching of biology in a school might indeed be more readily assessed by watching the pupils' treatment of flowers in wayside and garden than by any written examination paper. Biography would also point the moral, and no Science course could be really complete that did not include the stories of Pasteur, Lister, Ross, and the Curies.

Geography may be planned so as to open the pupil's eyes to the universe around him. Art may teach him an appreciation of its beauty and glory, and indeed almost every subject has some contribution to make to Christian teaching.

(5) *Religious teaching must include worship.*—Religious Instruction will consist of the imparting of such knowledge of the Bible, Christian law, and Christian ways of life as will inspire the pupil to express this knowledge in his own life, especially in the form of worship of his Creator. Of necessity worship must have its part in the giving of Religious Instruction in schools. The daily service is the most important event of the school day and requires very earnest and careful preparation; but as it will be discussed at length in a later chapter, here we need only state that the true value of the Religious Instruction in a school may best be seen in the attitude apparent in the corporate act of worship. For the daily service is more than an act of praise and prayer, it is the public expression by the pupils of their belief in a personal God.

A teacher wishing to assess the total result of his teaching will examine not only the instructional value of his work, but

the whole atmosphere of the school, and might ask himself these questions :

Is the discipline of the school based on the desire of the pupils to discipline themselves ?

Is the relationship between teacher and taught one of mutual good will and respect ?

Are the pupils always ready to perform tasks of self-sacrificing service ?

Is their behaviour on the sports field and out of school what one would expect from Christian girls and boys ?

Am I turning out pupils merely packed with facts and dogma, or pupils who have a lively desire to " confess the faith of Christ crucified and manfully to fight under His banner against sin, the world, and the devil " ?

Chapter II

SCHOOL WORSHIP

Each school morning should begin with an act of corporate worship in which the teachers and children rededicate themselves to God's service. The best practice is for the whole school to be gathered together in the central hall. Unfortunately in some schools this cannot be done, and the children must go direct to their classrooms ; but that is no reason to omit the morning act of worship, for the class teachers then have a splendid opportunity of instructing the children in "family prayers." Most Senior Schools will, however, have some assembly point where morning worship can take place. There are still misinformed people who declare that no real religious teaching is given in our schools, but their fears would be quickly dispelled if they attended the morning assembly in any one of many thousands of schools where the whole service is reverently conducted in a spirit of worship.

The arrangement of the room can add greatly to the spirit of reverence that the service should encourage in the children. Nothing is so detrimental to the proper atmosphere as a room littered with the paraphernalia of lessons—odd books, blackboards, and the like. Every endeavour should be made to keep the room neat and tidy, with possibly a few flowers arranged in vases and one or two good pictures. Aesthetic training is in much of its import religious training ; in the newer schools much can be done to combine the two, and even in the older schools some attempt can be made to achieve a neat and attractive interior. School prefects might help in the arranging of the room and in the giving out of hymn and service books. Girls, and boys too if encouraged, would take a delight in arranging flowers and keeping them fresh.

When children assemble for any purpose the manner in which they do so wields a considerable influence on the subsequent proceedings. Should they assemble for morning

worship in a noisy fashion the service will not readily be reverently conducted, whilst the opposite extreme, of marching into the hall and then standing rigidly at attention, is also to be deprecated, for the whole service may then be strained and artificial. The children should walk into the hall in a quiet, natural manner and stand at ease for the beginning of the service. Suitable music played as the children are entering or leaving greatly assists in the creation of the right atmosphere. March tunes, if carefully selected and not used in stiff military fashion, are specially suitable as they encourage the children to move briskly and cheerfully. On hearing the playing of the tunes children will begin to step out smartly ; but though this should be encouraged it should not be insisted upon. Whatever method is used the children must be taught to enter and leave in a quiet, orderly manner, and whilst taking part in the service to act in a reverent fashion. Every encouragement should be given them to assume a natural posture, both during hymn singing and in prayers. If they have been rightly trained books will be held at the angle proper for singing ; and when the reasons have been explained a reverent attitude will be readily adopted for prayers. " Let us pray " is a far better preamble than " Hands together, eyes closed." Certainly the service should not be stopped to reprimand a child for inattention, misbehaviour, or bad singing ; far better if the teacher has a quiet word with the delinquent after the service. It should be regarded as the deepest disgrace for any boy or girl to receive such a reprimand.

Though the head teacher is normally responsible for the assembly he or she should invite members of the staff to take turns in conducting the proceedings, and every endeavour should also be made to lead the children to take as large a share themselves as possible.

Those teachers who feel that they cannot by reason of their beliefs take part in such a service should quietly withdraw, for it is essential that no person present should give the impression of imperfectly participating in the act of worship. Teachers must show the children that they really do enjoy the service, and do not regard it as part of the day's routine ; they must

set an example. Their reverent attitude will assist in prompting the spirit of reverence, whereas if they appear negligent and bored the children will quickly detect the sham of the whole service, and retaliate by misbehaviour.

An insistence on reverent behaviour makes it incumbent on the teacher to see that the service, as well as being conducted in a proper manner, is carefully arranged to attract and hold the attention of the school. Hymns, lessons, and prayers require to be carefully chosen and arranged in a suitable order, so as to present a continuity of thought for the whole service. Allied with the continuity of thought there must be presentation of new ideas and the introduction of fresh hymns, lessons, and prayers from day to day. Probably no task is so difficult as the suitable arrangement of the morning assembly. Children easily become bored by constant repetition, and yet it is very difficult to provide suitable fresh material.

The following methods have, however, proved effective in many schools :

Provision is first made for " special occasions " in the life both of the community and of the school. Such occasions might be :

(*a*) *National Festivals*, *e.g.* Armistice Day, Empire Day, St. George's Day
(*b*) *School Occasions*, *e.g.* beginning and end of term, prize distributions, sports days
(*c*) *Events of the Christian year*, *e.g.* Christmas, Easter, Whitsuntide

The weeks remaining may then be used in one or other of the following ways :

(1) *A subject for each day of the week*, *e.g.*

Monday	The School
Tuesday	Home and Friends
Wednesday	The Church at Home and Overseas
Thursday	God and His work
Friday	Jesus Christ

A selection of suitable hymns, prayers, and lessons could

then be built up round these subjects, and a particular aspect of the subject dealt with on its appointed morning. Monday's subject might be dealt with as follows :

(*a*) The School at work
(*b*) The School at play
(*c*) Dedication to God's service
(*d*) God's forgiveness for our failings
(*e*) Praise for opportunities given to the school
(*f*) Old scholars

The disadvantages of this method are that it is sometimes difficult to find material to fit so narrow a theme, and that there is the danger of boring the children by repetition. It has, however, two major advantages. First, it does keep five main themes in front of the children, which, if presented in a variety of aspects, will help them to concentrate on definite lines of thought. Second, it provides opportunity for the introduction of litanies, responses, and prayers that do not bore the children if they occur only once a week, and yet are repeated sufficiently frequently to encourage their unconscious memorization. In this way the children are led to build up a varied body of prayers which may be of inestimable value to them.

(2) *A Subject for each week*

Subjects could be arranged in two groupings :

(*a*) Seasons of the Christian year—Christmas, Easter, Whitsuntide, etc.

(*b*) Topics, *e.g.* :

(i) Prayer	1st week	Prayers of Our Lord
	2nd week	The Lord's Prayer
	3rd week	Prayers of Thanksgiving
	4th week	Prayers of Penitence
	5th week	Prayers of Dedication
(ii) Nature	1st week	The Sea
	2nd week	Animals
	3rd week	The Countryside
	4th week	God in Nature

The advantage of this method is that it lends itself to a much wider choice of subjects, and thus a wider choice of hymns, lessons, and prayers, yet by the close grouping of the subjects the scheme need not become diffuse. It is a little more difficult to accustom the children to selected prayers and responses by means of judicious repetition, but it is possible to do so by using the same prayers for different purposes.

Prayers

The wise advice given to the young Indian hunter is, " Try to think with the mind of the hunted," and in choosing prayers for children the advice should be, " Try to think with the mind of the child." Many of the prayers that are loved and valued by adults are quite unsuitable for children. On the right choice of prayers will depend much of the value of the service, and the teacher must be watchful to see that the chosen prayers fulfil the requirements of children.

Amongst the criteria of good prayers for children's use are the following :

Do they express child thoughts, and not adult ideas, on the subjects concerned ?

Are they couched in language that can be readily understood by children ?

Is their wording not only simple but beautiful ? For nothing shoddy or second-rate should ever be offered to God.

Whilst being suitable for their immediate purpose, do they also serve as stepping-stones to the prayers in which the child will later express his more adult hopes and aspirations ?

What are a child's thoughts about God ? The vast majority of children of this age do not doubt the reality of God, for they still possess the simple faith that God really does exist and that He is a personal God. Very rarely is a Senior School pupil sceptical, and when he is it is usually because of the influence of an adult. A record of many questions asked by Senior

School pupils—questions that were written in the absence of the teacher and that could not be traced back to any individual scholar—gave the following analysis :

No pupil had any doubt about the existence of God.
Very few had any doubt about God's care for them personally, although a few asked the inevitable question how God could take care of everybody at the same time.
Some asked why they should pray to God if He already knew all about them.
About half wanted to know why they should pray, and whether God answered their prayers.
Many children asked if they must always use set prayers.

The above analysis shows that for that group of children at any rate training in prayer was needed, and that the prayers used for children ought to be concrete in content and direct in form. Children have little use for abstractions. Prayers to them mean a definite request to a personal God for something they desire or about something that troubles them. Prayers selected for school use should state their purpose in a way that will be clearly understood by the children ; and there is virtue even in the setting forth of a petition more than once in the course of a single prayer.

Many prayers are unsuitable for children because of their disproportionate insistence on the sinfulness of man. Children should not be led to regard themselves as miserable sinners, but as imperfect beings who yet have the capacity to become more and more God-like.

Children at this age are not very responsive to prayers in which they ask God to make them " good." One must realize that boys particularly have a rooted distrust of anything sentimental ; and, in fact, the " pi " type of child is often to be suspected. Christianity must be made an adventure, and one as thrilling as any in the world ; and the prayers used must correspondingly express the adventurous spirit.

It is an unfortunate fact that to-day little or no training in prayer is given to children either in the home, at school, or at their place of worship, a state of affairs leading to the steady

development of a spiritually inarticulate nation. The problem is so vital that it is amazing to discover how little thought has been given to it. But part of such training could be given by the use of suitable prayers in the school service. The following suggested outline may serve to show the type of prayer that is needed :

God has given me everything I possess, therefore I must thank Him :

for my parents and friends
for health and strength
for everything around me
for individual pleasures
for fun and games

God sent Jesus Christ to live like me, and He has called me to a wonderful adventure, therefore I must thank Him :

for what Jesus Christ has done
for the privilege of helping Jesus

I must ask Him :

to show me what I can do
to give me strength to do it

God really does know me, therefore I can ask Him :

to help people I know and love
to help my school comrades
to help me in my work and games

God knows that I sometimes fail in my adventure, therefore I must tell Him :

that I am sorry
that I really want to do better
that I am in need of His help more and more

God wants everybody to adventure along with Him, therefore I must ask Him :

to help all people everywhere
to give strength to all who are fighting with me

Whatever the subject the prayer must be definite and concrete, and must breathe a spirit of adventure.

The language, too, of the prayer must be carefully considered, and the teacher should beware of the prevalent idea that because a prayer is modern its diction is necessarily suitable for children, whilst that of the ancient collects is unsuitable. A phrase like " the royalty of inward happiness " would not be readily understood by children, although it occurs in a modern prayer. Further, the teacher must beware of the danger of selecting a prayer that attracts him but that may not attract children.

Admittedly some of the ancient collects are difficult for children, and the question arises as to whether they should be entirely omitted. Some people advocate their omission, forgetting of course that the Lord's Prayer is the most ancient of all. Earlier in the chapter was a recommendation for a progressive training in prayer, to link up with adult life ; it is the collects that can provide the link. Indiscriminate use of them is bad, but a judicious selection used sparingly, and with adequate preparation, has definite value.

When the use of the Bible was being discussed it was pointed out that many people read with enjoyment passages that they did not fully understand. *Alice in Wonderland* can be thoroughly enjoyed by quite young children, but only an adult understands and appreciates it fully. Similarly, it should be possible to choose certain ancient collects from which the children will derive benefit after brief explanation, but which they will appreciate and understand more fully as they grow older.

Care should be taken that the children are not bored by constant repetition of the same prayers, nevertheless judicious repetition of carefully chosen ones may well be approved. The aims of such repetition are, first, that the children may build up a body of prayers which they can use for their private devotions, and second, as already mentioned, that they may be enabled to find some fresh meaning each time the prayers are used—which is possible with rightly selected prayers. Certain prayers might be learnt by heart for repetition, so that the children may take an active part in the service. Some schools have their own school prayer which is used quite

frequently, and if a suitable choice has been made it may well prove a source of inspiration in later life.

Not only should the children take part in the prayers by repeating those they have learnt, but they should join in simple litanies and responses. Few children can remain very long with their eyes closed and give full attention to prayer repeated by another person, therefore the larger the part they are allowed to play, the better will be their act of worship.

Attention should also be paid to the use of silent prayer. Children will respond very well to this if their thoughts are properly directed and the pause is not too long. For the teacher to say merely, "We will have a few moments of silent prayer" is insufficient, as the school will probably react badly, and there may be a shuffling of feet, a tendency to look round, and even a titter. Training is required in this as in any other practice of prayer. If the spoken prayers have been wisely selected their completion will usually be followed by a silence which may be prolonged for a few moments. Here is an instance: "Let us pray for the school; let us remember those who were here in earlier years (silence); let us ask God to help each one of us (silence); let us ask God to help us in our work (silence) and in our play (silence)." Following this children might be encouraged to make their own prayers in the intervals of silence, the teacher giving the lead as follows: "Let us each one silently and in his own words pray for the school. Let us remember those who were here in earlier years (pause). Let us ask for God's blessing on the present members of the school (pause). Let us ask for God's blessing on our work (pause). On our play (pause)." At a later stage the suggested meditations may be given in a body to the children before silent prayer begins: "To-day let us think of our school, and pray for it silently and in our own words. Let us remember those who were here in earlier years, let us pray for ourselves, for our own friends here, for those we don't like very much. Let us ask God to bless our work and our play. Let us pray." This training in silent prayer can in fact be one of the most valuable forms of initiation into a later "prayer life."

One prayer which will be used more than any other will

be the Lord's Prayer, and the very frequency of its repetition may destroy its value. A great deal of time should be devoted in school to the teaching of it; and in fact many assemblies also might be devoted to its study, so that eventually every phrase would become pregnant with meaning. Teachers should try to think out varieties of ways in which it may be reinforced; it could be sung or said; simple litanies could be based on it; a particular phrase could be emphasized by a brief word of introduction before the prayer was used.

From the above considerations it may appear almost impossible for the busy teacher to make adequate preparation for the morning assembly. Certainly the task is not easy, but with the use of the many excellent books now available it should prove quite practicable. The following brief summary of requirements in respect of prayers may be useful for reference:

The prayers should be simple and concrete.

They should not be morbid or sentimental, but expressive of a spirit of adventure.

They should comprise a judicious mixture of modern prayers and ancient collects.

The children should take a large share in the prayers and responses. Silent prayer should be introduced.

There should be variety, but a few prayers should be definitely memorized.

Bible Reading

Passages of scripture chosen to fit the theme for the week will naturally be selected. Care should be taken to see that these are such as to be well within the grasp of the children, for many of the more beautiful passages are exceedingly difficult for younger minds. As an example, the first chapter of the *Gospel according to St. John* is a firm favourite in numbers of schools, and yet few children are likely to understand its meaning. Passages that tell a story are readily appreciated and should be used frequently, yet this should not deter the teacher from introducing more reflective passages. Such reflective passages should be short, and prefaced by a brief

introduction (as, in fact, should most of the readings). Instead of having the whole of the first twelve or fourteen verses of the first chapter of *St. John* read as a unit, it would be better to explain to the children first that St. John had discovered an eternal truth, namely, that Jesus Christ was God eternal (" the Word " was another name for Him), and then have only the first two verses read. Stage by stage the rest of the passage would be similarly treated.

Many schools allow the children themselves to read the lessons, which is a sound practice so long as the children are properly coached not only in the reading but in the understanding of them. To be allowed to read should be a jealously guarded privilege only granted to those who are prepared to devote time in preparation. The privilege should not be reserved for the A classes, as it should be possible to select simple passages that can be read by B or even C stream children.

The Authorized or the Revised Version will provide the majority of the lessons, although other sources may be used from time to time. Poems (including hymns) and extracts from books like *The Pilgrim's Progress* are suitable.

One word of warning is necessary. Although the New Testament will provide the majority of the lessons, the Old Testament should not be neglected, otherwise the impression left in the children's minds will be that it is of little importance. A careful study of the Prophets and Psalms will reveal many suitable but previously unsuspected passages. The revelation of God was progressive, and therefore there is value in the study of the earlier stages of revelation of the Old Testament.

Hymns

Many of the suggestions made in regard to choice of prayers are equally applicable to choice of hymns. Children love to sing, and they enjoy most of all a good swinging tune, something that they regard as manly. Most schools have a member of staff who is musical and who is prepared to take charge of this side of the service. He should be encouraged to do so,

but care should be taken that in his enthusiasm he does not kill the children's love of singing. A simple melody well sung and enjoyed by the children is preferable to an elaborate rendering that is mechanically perfect but deadly dull.

By all means train the children to sing correctly and increase their knowledge of music, but remember that the sole aim in this period is the worthy worship of God, which can be achieved only if the school has its whole heart in the service. Children should be encouraged to improve their hymn-singing because only their best should be offered to God, not because Mr. Smith or Miss Jones will be angry if they sing flat. Starting from tunes with a well-marked rhythm the good teacher can introduce the children to a variety of types of hymn, and similarly to chants and psalms.

The teacher should see that, as with the prayers, the selected hymns are as concrete as possible, and neither sentimental in tone nor morbid in outlook. Fortunately during the last few years a number of admirable hymn books have been published which provide a wide selection of suitable hymns set to satisfactory tunes. Further, unsatisfactory verses in the more popular hymns have been omitted or rewritten. Starting with some well-known hymns, the teacher should gradually build up a collection which is suitable for most occasions, which the children enjoy singing, and of which the tunes are pleasing and ideas intelligible and wholesome.

Explanation of hymns often interests children and adds to the interest of singing them. The story of *The Pilgrim's Hymn* and of its composer, John Bunyan, might preface the learning of the hymn itself.

Just as a few prayers should be learnt by heart, so should a few hymns. By judicious repetition during the period of worship, and occasional revision at other times, the hymns would be easily learnt. A school hymn as well as a school prayer could be a source of high inspiration.

The Daily Worship of the school is the focal point of its Religious Instruction, and as such demands the utmost care in its total preparation and presentation. It must be suitable

for the children ; it must possess both unity and diversity. The following is an outline of a typical School Assembly :

Teacher. We are taking as our lesson subject this week " Christianity in Action," meaning that if we are to be real Christians we must show it by our lives. Listen to what our Lord said about it.

(A scholar reads the lesson from *St. Matthew*, vii. 16–21, " Not every one that saith unto me Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven.")

Teacher. Jesus says we must do things for Him, we must fight for Him; so we will sing the first, second, and last verses of *Onward! Christian Soldiers.*

(After the singing of the hymn :)

Teacher. Let us pray. Let us ask God to forgive us for all the opportunities we have missed of helping others (pause). Let us try to think of someone we can help at school or at home to-day (pause). Now let us ask God to give us strength to carry out the resolutions we have made (pause).

Lord, hear our Prayer.

Children. And let our prayer come unto Thee.

Teacher. Let us say together the School Prayer which asks God to make us His soldiers.

(All repeat :) Grant us, Good Lord, to love Thee as Thou deservest, to give and not to count the cost, to fight and not to heed the wounds, to toil and not to seek for rest, to labour and not to ask for any reward save that of knowing that we do Thy will. Amen.

Teacher. As we repeat the Lord's Prayer let us particularly notice the words " Thy Kingdom Come," and remember that God wants our help.

(All repeat the Lord's Prayer.)

Teacher. The Blessing.

Adequate preparation will demand many hours of hard work for the head teacher and staff, particularly if they wish to draw up a complete scheme for the school. Nowadays when teachers are overburdened with extraneous duties the task is almost impossible. Although there are several excellent books that may be used for school worship, they cannot in the nature of things fit each individual school. It is suggested that the head teacher should obtain one or more of these books, and using them as the basis of his scheme, add to them lessons, prayers, hymns, etc., especially suited to his particular school.

He can then delegate to one member of the staff the preparation of the lessons, to another the musical portion, and possibly to a third the arrangement of the prayers, whilst he acts as the co-ordinating partner. One school has appointed a small committee of children with the power to make suggestions for the conduct of assembly, and it has proved a great asset.

Although the work entailed is great, the results will be ample recompense, for this assembly worship can become a most valuable training ground for the children in the habit of public worship, and a source of permanent inspiration.

Recommended Books

Complete Service Books

The Daily Service. Briggs and Dearmer. (Oxford University Press)
The Oxford Book of School Worship. Parts II and III. (S.P.C.K.)
The School Assembly. J. M. MacDougall. (Religious Education Press)
School Worship Day by Day. R. L. Arundale. (National Society)

Prayers

An Anthology of Prayer. A. S. T. Fisher. (Longmans)
A Book of Prayers for Schools. H. Martin. (S.C.M.)
A Chain of Prayer across the Ages. E. Selina Fox. (Murray)
The Daily Prayer. Briggs and White. (Oxford University Press)
Two Years' Readings for School Prayers. (National Society; S.P.C.K.)

Bible Readings

Anthology of the Bible. E. Parker. (Seeley Service)
Bible Prose and Poetry. Geoffrey H. Crump. (Nelson)
The Daily Reading. G. W. Briggs. (Oxford University Press)
Graded Bible Readers, Books 1–5. (Nelson)
A New Testament Lectionary for Schools. T. C. Heritage. (S.C.M.)

Hymns

Church and School Hymnal. (S.P.C.K.)
English Hymnal. (Oxford University Press)
Hymns of the Kingdom. Walford Davies. (S.C.M.)
Songs of Praise. (Oxford University Press)

CHAPTER III

THE USE OF THE BIBLE

THE Authorized Version of the Bible (and the Revised Version, which is based on it) is a masterpiece of English literature. Certain passages, such as the first chapter of St. John's Gospel, are unsurpassed in any language. The number of prose masterpieces in English is limited, and these—a priceless heritage—must be preserved not merely as museum relics, but as inspired literature to be read and enjoyed by endless generations. This is particularly true of the Bible. Yet thousands of children are daily developing a distaste for the Bible by being compelled to read passages from the Authorized or Revised Version which they cannot possibly understand.

It must be realised that the ability to appreciate the beauty of Biblical language is the result of long training or a special sensitiveness to the rhythmic sound of words. To expect children of eleven years of age to savour the beauty of Biblical prose is asking the impossible. Old people of little education do read and enjoy their reading, but this is usually because of their great faith in the Bible. Often they fail to understand the full meaning of its language, but their religious faith is so great that they struggle manfully with what is to them almost a foreign tongue. For every one of these persevering souls there must be thousands who have lost the desire to continue their Bible reading because of the literary difficulties and because their faith is not sufficiently strong. This problem is naturally much greater with children, and to expect their faith to surmount such an obstacle is asking too much of them.

Whilst it should be the aim of the teacher of Religious Knowledge to have all pupils leaving school able to read the Authorized or Revised Version, he should be well satisfied if even 30 per cent. do so, and this only after careful training. Certainly in the First Year classes (11 years of age) only a very small proportion will be able to read intelligently without

considerable help. The Bible lesson will then fail in its purpose, for it will become a lesson in comprehension rather than in religious instruction.

Frankness on this subject is necessary because it is only too easy for a teacher to be deceived. Mere mechanical fluency is insufficient. Intelligent children often read a passage quite well and with sufficient " expression " to deceive all but the most experienced teachers. The oft-repeated remark, " Use expression in your reading," may itself become an encouragement to mechanical word reproduction, for children, by over-emphasizing commas and full stops, may acquire a lilting sing-song manner, which leaves the inexperienced listener with the impression that they really understand the passage they are reading. The real test is to ask the pupil to read the passage silently, and then to reproduce orally, and in his own words, what he has read. Very few even of the best children, whose expression is normally excellent, can pass this test.

This should not discourage the teacher, however, for he has really been attempting the impossible, the children of first-rate intelligence having been creamed off by scholarships to the Secondary Schools. In the Senior Schools and the Senior divisions of reorganised Elementary Schools at least one-third will be C children, who are well below average intelligence ; another third will be B children, most of whom are below the average ; and the remainder will be A children, of whom only a small proportion will be above the average intelligence. In the typical Senior School at least 50 per cent. of the children are of sub-normal intelligence, and in many districts the percentage will be considerably higher. If, therefore, these sub-normal children are expected to read and understand a prose work that taxes the capacity of an intelligent adult, the results are bound to be disastrous. Lessons become comprehension tests in their worst form, because children are being asked to comprehend and appreciate something that is far beyond their mental capacity or experience, with the inevitable result that the lessons lose all value as a religious experience, and there is bred in the children a distaste for so-called Religious Instruction.

The solution appears to be twofold, the gradual training of the more intelligent children in the capacity to read the Authorized or Revised Version satisfactorily, and the realization that in the B and C classes, as it is useless trying to attempt such teaching, the reading should be confined to simple extracts.

Inspirational literature has its place in the Religious Instruction lesson, but much of the training in appreciation can and should be carried out in the English lessons. If the A.V. and R.V. are masterpieces of English, their claim to be taught in English lessons for their literary merit alone is well-founded. Taught as examples of literary style they must also become the source of inspiration, for literary style is merely the vehicle by which noble thoughts are transferred from mind to mind. Close co-operation between teachers could ensure that passages used in the English period would be further discussed in the Religious Instruction period. Literary style and understanding of meaning will be the chief aims in the English period, whilst in the other the religious ideas and inspiration will be more closely studied. The frequency with which such lessons are given will depend on the ability of the children, the amount of co-operation between members of the staff, and the ability of individual teachers to undertake the work.

At this stage the question must be asked, " Why do we expect children to read the Bible ? " Religious Instruction lessons should never become reading lessons, when the Bible is read by each pupil in turn. As previously stated, this archaic method is now discouraged in all other subjects, and its survival in scripture teaching is to be regretted. Neither is Religious Instruction a lesson in which children are taught to read. The reading matter available should be suited to the capacity of the children taught, so that little difficulty is experienced either in the mechanics of reading or in the comprehension of the material used. Reading is included in the lesson as a method of conveying instruction, and through that instruction inspiration to translate ideas received into practical form. The test for all reading matter made use of during periods devoted to Religious Instruction should be : can it be easily understood

by the children, and are the ideas conveyed such as will in some form or other add to the pupil's religious experience?

It follows from this that reading aloud will have a very small place in the Senior School, even with B and C classes; its chief use will be when passages from the Revised or Authorized Version are being discussed, after previous study for their literary merit. (Dramatic reading and choral speaking may also be regarded as "reading aloud.")

The primary purpose of training children to read the Bible whilst they are in school is to enable them to continue their own religious education when they have left school, and to have available a perpetual source of inspiration. If they are capable of training in the Authorized or Revised Version so much the better, but every child should receive training in the use of a "Bible" which he or she will desire to read in after years. The school must therefore not only give training, but create a desire to continue the training. In the A classes much of the work may be done by private study methods by which the children secure information for themselves. But private study must not be overdone, as there is a general need for discussion and further oral explanation by the teacher. The B and C classes should also do some private reading in appropriate books that they can read without difficulty.

The above proposals presuppose a supply of various types of Bible substitutes, and the following is a suggested scheme:

A Stream Classes

(1) To be available for each pupil's reference a copy of the Authorized or Revised Version. (Some education authorities provide each pupil entering a Senior School with a Bible, which becomes his own property when he leaves. This commendable practice should certainly be extended, the only debatable point being as to whether the copy provided should always be the Authorized or Revised Version.)

This copy of the Bible will be used as follows:

For the literary and religious study of passages that can be readily understood by the children.

Some teachers prefer to cyclostyle copies of passages for literary study, but the disadvantage of this course is that the children are receiving no training in discovering the passage for themselves. As many schools include in their course of study a short account of the history of the books of the Bible, it is useful for the children themselves to be trained as early as possible to locate the passages.

It is a debatable point whether or not the copy provided should be the full text or one of the excellent books of extracts now available. Most people are agreed that many passages in the Authorized or Revised Version are unsuitable for children, and that others are of importance only to trained theologians. There is no unanimity as to those passages that shall be included, although steps towards it have been made in recent years. If, however, the children are provided with the full text, two very important objections arise. First, books are still relatively expensive to produce, and few schools have an adequate book allowance. Unabridged Bibles printed on good paper, with wide margins, clear type, and strong bindings, are too expensive for school use. Furthermore, their size makes them unsuitable for storage or for use by younger children. Second, the inclusion of what would be to the children extraneous matter has a bad psychological effect. Everyone knows that children, even more than adults, when presented with a new book, like to read samples here and there ; and in the course of sampling the Bible they might well encounter unsuitable and uninteresting matter that would create in their minds a feeling that the Bible is a dull and bleak work only enlivened here and there by interesting stories. Although there is not, and probably never will be, complete unanimity on the wisdom of the omission or retention of particular passages in any book of extracts, the weight of evidence appears to point to the use of such a book rather than of the full text.

(2) To be used by each pupil, a modern retelling of the Bible which may keep close to the Authorized or Revised text provided that the meaning is never obscure. Few suitable retellings are available, but it must be borne in mind that for these children such a prepared version is a temporary expedient,

and that as their training progresses they will more and more come to use the Authorized or Revised Version.

The teacher will need to compile a list of Authorized or Revised Version extracts to cover the ground of the three or four years' course, and whenever possible these extracts will be used. As the children grow older more and more extracts will be read, so that before the children leave school the more intelligent among them will be using the A.V. and R.V. for almost all purposes, and not only using it but using it with understanding and liking.

B Stream Classes

These are usually the most difficult classes to cater for, for it is here that are grouped potential A children who are retarded by reason of ill-health or some maladjustment, the true B child who is slightly below average intelligence, and the C child who has disguised his low intelligence by his extremely neat work or by other similar means. In schools where the system of grading is not sufficiently fine, and is based largely on mechanical English and Mathematics, these classes often include children who are highly intelligent, and if the teacher of Religious Instruction secures the confidence of these children they will soon show by their well-reasoned questions that they have been wrongly graded, and yield the teacher an opportunity of discussing their problem with the head teacher.

There also arises the problem of the Two-stream School, where the B classes include a large proportion of C children.

For both schools that have B and C stream classes and those that have B and C children in one class, the solution would appear to be group learning, each section tackling work that is most suited to its capabilities. Many teachers use this method for Mathematics, and there is no reason why it should not be attempted in Religious Instruction. With the Three-stream School probably two groups would be sufficient, and with the Two-stream School three groups.

First Stream

These children will use the same books as the A classes, namely :

(1) A copy of the A.V. or R.V. or a book of extracts therefrom.
(2) A modern retelling of the Bible.

The course will be similar to that for A classes, but the number of extracts studied will be smaller.

Second Stream

This will contain the true B children, namely, those who are below average in ability but can write a piece of simple English and read non-literary books quite well. Their sensitiveness to literature is small, but they can be stirred if the passage studied contains a definite story. Leading them is very easy, for, though sullen and stubborn if driven, they will often undertake quite uncongenial tasks if suitably encouraged.

The books most suitable for them would appear to be :

(1) A copy of the A.V. or R.V., or a book of extracts therefrom, for each pupil.

This will not be often used. The children being of a non-literary type, form does not appeal to them, but they will be capable of taking in the simpler passages of the Bible. A certain enjoyment can be secured if the teacher directs them to find the passage for themselves as a kind of detective exercise. For this reason a fairly complete text is desirable. There is, too, another and less obvious reason : children will sometimes read a book that they do not fully understand and yet will apparently enjoy doing so. Some only pretend to read, so as to impress the teacher ; but cases do occur where a pupil reads a difficult book with no other idea except enjoyment. If the Bible is available the opportunity might be taken by such children to make it their particular book. When they leave school the Authorized or Revised Version will be readily available wherever they go, and there will be some prospect of their continuing to read it. The instance of the uneducated adult reading the Bible regularly has already been referred to, and it may well be that some of those children will have a faith

in God that will impel them to become regular and permanent Bible readers. Educationally such reading would not appear to be of high value, yet though few of the B children will ever be able fully to understand the parts of the Authorized or Revised Version that they read, the opportunity of reading it must be provided.

(2) A modern retelling of the Bible written in simple English and preferably containing some passages from the actual text.

Until such a book is available the best the teacher can do is to use one of the versions written in simple English and refer to the actual text when desired.

For most children this will be the " Bible " best suited to them, and throughout their course they will become most familiar with it. If Education Authorities decide to present children with a Bible when they leave school, it is a Bible of this type that should be given to B stream pupils.

Schemes of work vary so much from school to school that in the course of this chapter reference has been made only to books that will fit the majority of schemes—namely, those that contain the most commonly used sections of the Bible arranged in their traditional order.

There are, however, books of the story type which might be used in some schools. Quite a number of books have been published that tell the story of Our Lord's life, and some that incorporate extracts from the Authorized or Revised Versions. Similar books dealing with the stories of the Old Testament and the Acts of the Apostles are also available.

The question of whether to adopt a complete Bible in modern English or books of stories is one for the individual school. Unfortunately compilers of an agreed syllabus almost invariably cater for the A pupils only. The consequence is that any agreed syllabus is likely to have the following defects where B and C children are concerned :

(*a*) It will contain too many textual references.

(*b*) It will suggest too advanced matters for study, *e.g.* the Prayers of Our Lord.

Whilst, of course, any syllabus can be adapted to meet the needs of any type of child, if an average unadapted Agreed Syllabus is followed, the type of " Bible " to be used must be one containing portions of the A.V. or R.V. But a school deciding against an Agreed Syllabus and in favour of the simple Bible outline alone, need not use a " Bible " at all, but only modern retellings of the great Old and New Testament stories.

Third Stream

As for C stream classes.

C Stream Classes

Many children in these classes will have difficulty in reading anything except the simplest English, and their written work will be of a very low standard ; in fact their mental age will be usually at least three years below their chronological age. Most lessons in Religious Instruction will be oral ones, but even in these, if the children are to be trained to continue Bible study after leaving school, they must be introduced to a type of Bible likely to appeal to them and capable of being read easily. Few will be able to read the Authorized or Revised Version with any degree of fluency, but will in fact stumble at almost every word. Literary appreciation has next to no meaning for them, but thrilling stories always hold their attention.

They require :

(*a*) A few simple extracts to study from a religious and not an English literature viewpoint, *e.g.* the Lord's Prayer, 23rd Psalm.

(*b*) Story books telling the Bible stories in simple language, with numerous pictures.

The teacher must be content if he can inspire these children through simple Bible stories and accounts of missionary heroes. If the children are given a genuine desire " to be like Jesus," and a realization that He was the greatest of all heroes, the teacher's task has been well done. The books used must have

a strong human interest, and emphasize the adventure of Christianity. Girls, particularly the older ones, are often attracted by domestic details and stories of mothers and of children.

It would almost appear that the books used in Junior Schools would be suitable for these children, but to judge so is a fatal error. Although retarded mentally they very quickly resent any reminder of this. Their parents themselves are often of low mentality, and regard their offspring as quite normal—in fact they frequently look upon them as very clever! Head teachers sometimes have difficulty in explaining to such parents why their children, who are in a high position in a C class, cannot hope to become doctors or lawyers. Although retarded these children must be treated as normally intelligent, and the fact also recognized that their physical and psychological development may be normal.

The type of book required is one that, though written in simple fashion, is in format as adult as possible. As yet suitable books are rare, but in schools where book-binding is included in the curriculum it might be possible to buy junior books and rebind them in a more suitable manner, and perhaps paste in more appropriate illustrations.

Although many editions of the Bible are published there are as yet few that are really suitable for schools. The ideal Bible for use in schools would have to satisfy a number of conditions. First, it should be strongly and attractively bound; many cheap editions are valueless in schools, as the binding will not stand up to the hard wear and tear required of it, and it is heavy in appearance, in fact in a traditional style that at once stamps the Bible as a book apart. Whilst this format may be an advantage for suggesting to children that the Bible should be treated reverently, it does not encourage them to pick up the book during odd moments for silent reading. Probably the most suitable binding would be an attractively coloured washable cloth.

Second, the Bible should be illustrated in line with the best modern technique. The portrayal, in any technique, of Jesus as a pale and passive figure should, however, be discountenanced.

There is much controversy about the value of pictures showing Biblical scenes, particularly those that incorporate representations of Bible personages. A solution of the problem, and one that would add to the attractiveness as well as to the teaching value of the Bible, would be to provide instead carefully chosen and well produced photographs, line-drawings, etchings, woodcuts, and coloured illustrations of typical Palestinian scenes, both geographical and domestic. Children like to see illustrations showing the type of clothes, furniture, houses, etc., belonging to the people about whom they are reading.

Maps are provided in some Bibles, but they usually contain far too much detail to be of teaching value. Simply produced line maps, coloured if possible, serve the purpose admirably.

Third, type and its spacing in the Bible should be pleasant to the eye ; the type should be large and clean-cut, and there should be adequate margins. It is indeed questionable if the traditional two-column style and the present chapter headings should be retained. But a well-printed complete Bible tends to be so unwieldy that to obtain lightness the publisher is driven to use small type and narrow margins. This consideration forms another argument in favour of using an abbreviated Bible, or a book of Bible selections.

In far too many schools teachers are handicapped in their work by having to use unsuitable Bibles, though there are good editions on the market. Until the book allowance is generous, however, teachers must continue to use cheap and unsatisfactory editions.

Recommended Books

Short Bibles

The Cambridge Shorter Bible. (Cambridge University Press)
The Cambridge Senior Bible. (Cambridge University Press)
The Children's Bible. (Cambridge University Press)
The Little Children's Bible. (Oxford University Press.)
The School Bible. (Nelson)
A Short Bible. (Basil Blackwell)

Modern Versions

A New Translation of the Old and New Testaments. Moffatt. (Hodder & Stoughton)

New Tales from the Old Testament. G. B. Harrison. (Nelson)

More New Tales from the Old Testament. G. B. Harrison. (Nelson)

The New Testament in Basic English. (Cambridge University Press)

The Weymouth New Testament in Modern Speech. (Hodder & Stoughton)

Stories

Interviews with Old Testament Characters. Arthur Ince. (S.C.M.)

Heralds of God : Stories of Hebrew Prophets. J. B. Thomson Davies. (S.C.M.)

A Little Life of Jesus. Basil Matthews. (Oxford University Press)

A People's Life of Christ. J. Paterson Smyth. (Hodder & Stoughton)

Jesus the Carpenter of Nazareth. Robert Bird. (Nelson)

The Children's Life of Christ. Enid Blyton. (Methuen)

Chapter IV

BIBLICAL CRITICISM

In every subject only the best presentation is good enough. This is true in a very special way of the study of religion, for any religious training worthy of the name must have a bearing on every aspect of life. In this chapter we are concerned with the presentation of the Bible, which is the source book of the Christian faith. But first we must know all we can of the Bible as it appears to-day. The application of the best brains and the widest knowledge to the study of the Bible is known as biblical criticism.

The Bible was originally written partly in Hebrew and partly in Greek, and the question of translation is a bigger one than is usually realized. The combined work of the best Hebrew, Greek, and English scholars is needed if the translation is to do justice to the original. In addition to the difficult task of discovering the exact meaning of the text, there is the equally difficult task of determining after 2,000 years and in many cases an even longer period what were the actual words written by the ancient writers. The determination of the most accurate text from a great variety of MSS. and versions is known as textual criticism.

Another very important problem is that of historical validity. It is asked if the writers were reliable historians, if they gave true accounts of battles and sieges, and if the speeches they recorded gave substantially what was actually said. Here there are two kinds of evidence to be considered, external evidence and internal evidence.

External evidence is afforded by historical records and references outside the Bible. Side by side with the civilization of the Hebrew people there were also thriving civilizations in the lands of Egypt and Mesopotamia. Fortunately both these countries have left records behind them from which much may be learnt of the conditions of the time, and in addition there

are various references to the contemporary history of the Hebrews. These references can be collated with the Bible version and a check made on the latter's accuracy. Of course the records of the ancient peoples dwelling next the Hebrews may be far from true history, but they do form a valuable source of comparison. Archeology also has made many valuable contributions to the understanding of the Bible.

Internal evidence cites different accounts of the same event, or of the same speech, given at different points in the Bible, and endeavours to deduce from them the probable truth. Account has to be taken of the personal outlook of the writers, the sources from which they drew their material, and their purpose in writing, as far as it is possible to discover these.

In the last hundred years there has been a remarkable extension of scientific knowledge. Science naturally has to be taken fully into account in the study of any subject to-day, and the study of the Bible is no exception. It is impossible to leave out of account the bearing of modern science on the story of Creation, or on the interpretation of prophecy and miracle.

All these aspects of biblical criticism (perhaps biblical study would be a better name) are dealt with for the most part quite simply in the various books mentioned at the end of this chapter. It is not our task here to elaborate them, but to consider the practical question of how the results of modern biblical study may be applied to religious teaching in the Senior School.

As a general principle it may be said that the teaching of young children is not an end in itself. The end is to prepare them for their after life. It is therefore important that no teaching be given them which they will have to unlearn later on. The presentation of the Bible must be planned with a view to establishing a sound Christian faith that will stand the challenge of life. This means that even the early teaching must be so managed as to be able to withstand the criticism of the 16-year-old and the adult. In the Senior School particularly important is the mode of presentation of the

work. In the Junior School this will have been mainly the vivid story method—the problems that puzzle so much in later years do not arise. But we are concerned with the school stage that first brings up direct questioning.

How far is Bible criticism to be taken? That is the first question to be considered. A second question, allied to it, is, How is this criticism to be raised? With regard to the first, it must be recognized that there is not always agreement, even among experts, as to what is the true text and what is the right interpretation of it. But one may advance as a general principle that biblical criticism concerning a particular matter should be taken as far as there is reasonable agreement among the best scholars. In many cases the best that can be done is to explain two possibilities and leave the pupils to exercise their own judgment after hearing the available evidence. But at every stage of the presentation two overriding considerations must be borne in mind. First, that there is no limit to the power of God. There is only one thing that God cannot do, and that is to become self-contradictory. His power is greater than can possibly be imagined. Second, that if one presents the Bible as a story-book about things that never happen in these days, one fails completely to do justice to the nature of the Bible in that it is essentially a book of vivid human experience. When one reads of actions, for example, exactly contrary to the usual working of nature in our experience it is natural and right to question them and to look and see if there is any explanation. There is, of course, the possibility of giving a shock to children of eleven if one tells them suddenly that this and this never really happened, and what did happen was quite different. There will, however, be a still greater shock if they are sent out from school with the literal Bible stories in their mind, without any attempt at explanation, or without even the apprehension that there may be another view on the subject. How then is Bible criticism to be dealt with? The answer would seem to be: in answer to the children's own questions—if during lessons every encouragement is given the class to ask them.

The following are examples of children's questions arising

in the course of actual lessons. The questions cannot all be fully answered here, but indications can be given of the direction of the answers, and the method of introducing the children to simple biblical criticism.

In what might be called a puzzle lesson the children were invited to ask questions on any subject that interested them and presented difficulty. One question asked was, " Is the story about Adam and Eve and God making the world in six days true? " The treatment attempted was along these lines. First some discussion was held on what truth is, and the different kinds of truth. There is the truth of the facts of experience of the senses. An orange is round in shape, it has pips in it and a bitter skin, but the juice is sweet. There is the truth of a picture. In some of the old masterpieces showing Mary, the mother of Jesus, with the child in her arms, the details of dress and background may be quite out of period, but the truth of the spirit is there. There is the intellectual truth of an isosceles triangle as conceived in the mind of the mathematician. Wordsworth said of the daffodils, " Ten thousand saw I at a glance." Had he counted them? Presumably not, but he is telling the truth all the same in a vivid pictorial suggestion of the masses of them. There is the truth of inward sight and hearing, which may be just as real as that of outward sight and hearing, and this should be remembered in considering stories of visions. Frequently the truth of vivid stories is to be found in what is seen in the mind's eye and what is heard in the mind's ear. Following this the suggestion was made that everything in the Bible is true in some context or other. The Creation story is true in its great statement, " In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth," but the context giving the steps in the process of creation may not be literally true, just as a great picture or poem may be true in essentials, but inaccurate in detail. For the detail of the development of life in the world modern science has a different technique from that of the first chapter of Genesis. The latter conveys the spiritual truths that God is the Creator, and that man is made in the image of God—that is, shares in the ultimate values of God Himself, in truth, beauty, and goodness.

In the course of lessons on the Prophets, on one occasion the subject was the contest on Mount Carmel between Elijah and the prophets of Baal (1 Kings xviii.). The question following was asked. " After three years' drought where did Elijah get the water from ? " and " Could the fire have been lightning ? " This at once gives the opportunity to admit that there may be a natural explanation for the story—how when Elijah was preparing the sacrifice on Mount Carmel, and the prophets of Baal theirs too, a violent thunderstorm broke out, and Elijah's sacrifice, struck by lightning, was burnt up. The impression on those present may well be imagined. " The Lord, he *is* the God ; The Lord, he *is* the God." In the course of many hundred years the story might well have taken the form in which we have it in the Bible. This is not to deny the supernatural, or that God works through nature : it is only to apply the scientific method to the evidence.

Turning now to the New Testament we find the wonderful story of " the walking on the water." In a lesson on this incident a child asked the question, " What happened ? did Jesus just turn and walk straight out to sea ? " (A question on the same subject was asked at an open-air meeting by a man who appeared quite sincere, " Do you expect us to believe in a phantom who walked on water ? ") In the attempted answer it was first pointed out that this story occurs in three of the Gospels. The different accounts were read and carefully compared. The references are at Matt. xiv. 22–33 ; Mark vi. 45–52 ; John vi. 16–21. All three versions agree in describing Jesus as " walking on the sea." But this phrase taken by itself in the Greek may mean " near the sea," or " on the sea-shore," as it does in John xxi. 1. Matthew and Mark say that the disciples saw Jesus when " in the midst of the sea." John says that it was when they had already rowed about twenty-five or thirty furlongs. The lake at its widest is forty furlongs across. The disciples were not crossing at the widest place. They were going from the eastern side of the lake north-westwards towards Capernaum, or as Mark says, Bethsaida. So according to John they were practically across when they saw Jesus. Matthew and

Mark express the wonder felt by the disciples. There is no such expression in John. In fact, as the story stands in St. John's Gospel the disciples, after rowing twenty-five or thirty furlongs, that is practically to their destination across the lake, saw Jesus before them on the seashore. They were filled with surprise, but He called out to them, and they turned in to take Him on board, when the boat grounded. In Mark's version the story has a certain heightening of the miraculous element, and in Matthew this is still more apparent when Peter, too, is represented as walking on the water, at least for a short distance. This possible explanation was offered the children without any idea of putting a limit to the power of God : it was an attempt to do justice to the three accounts, and to the Christian faith that Jesus was a real human person, not a phantom.

It may be of interest to consider, too, the story of the Feeding of the Five Thousand. During a lesson on that story a child asked the question, " Did more and more bread just come pouring out as Jesus broke the loaves ? " In the answer it was pointed out that the story is recorded in all the Gospels. Mark and Matthew even add a second version in which the number given is 4,000. Further, there are two difficulties in the Gospels themselves. First, how is this story to be reconciled with the temptation of Jesus to turn stones into bread, when He rejected what seems at first sight a similar course of action ? Second, very shortly after this incident in Mark the disciples and Jesus crossed the Sea of Galilee again, and the disciples were anxious because they had forgotten to take bread with them (Mark viii. 13–21). This suggests that the emphasis on the physical food was not really what Jesus intended. The idea was then put to the children that when the lad brought up his five loaves and two fishes to Jesus, others were inspired to do the same. The result was that there was enough for all. A further idea was put to the children, namely, that this action of Jesus was in some way an anticipation of the Communion Service. This is suggested by the way St. John, after his record of the feeding in chapter vii., adds the great discourse on the bread of life. Either of these suggestions would make it easier to understand the story in the light of the two

difficulties mentioned above, and would encourage detective work in elucidation of the real facts.

Another series of questions centred round the healing stories in the Bible. Here it is reasonable to draw a distinction between the Old and New Testaments. In the Old Testament the healing stories practically all occur in the early part, which is from the point of view of history not nearly so well supported as the later parts. It would seem that the stories about Elijah and Elisha might be legends of the kind that naturally spring up round the life of any remarkable character. It is indeed noticeable that when we come to the writing prophets whose contribution to the religion of the Old Testament is more important than that of any others there are no miracle or healing stories recorded. In the New Testament a large number of healing stories with valid historical evidence behind them (that is, as far as the authenticity of the Gospel record is concerned) are incorporated in the life of Christ.

In considering these stories in school it may be pointed out that in these days doctors and surgeons perform marvellous cures. We hear of men who were blind being given back their sight. To-day a surgeon removes a cataract by a skilful operation and a man's sight is restored. Nineteen hundred years ago Jesus anointed a man's eyes with clay and bade him go and wash, and his sight was restored. In each case the wonder of it is the same. More and more to-day the power of the mind over the body is being recognised. Jesus was a man of goodness above all men, and a man of love. There is no limit to the power of His goodness and love over the diseased in mind and body.

There is one type of healing in the Gospel story which is most difficult for us to understand. It is the healing described in the phrase, "casting out demons, or devils." It is generally agreed that in ancient days the Jews attributed every ailment to the power of some evil spirit. When the spirit was cast out the patient was healed. The phrase is also used of people who were mad. One of the best-known stories connected with this meaning is that of the healing of the man who said his name was Legion (Mark v. 1–20). Children are interested in the destruc-

tion of the herd of swine, but are puzzled by the idea of the evil spirits. A lesson on this story offers an opportunity for both general and psychological explanation. We are apt to think when we hear the story read that the incident was all over in five minutes. A careful consideration of the text, however, shows that it was in the evening that Jesus first met the man from the tombs, and it was not till the following morning that he was sitting clothed and in his right mind at Christ's feet. The healing took all night. This should be explained to the children. Examine the story in detail. The madman flung himself at Christ's feet. " Come out of the man, thou unclean spirit," Jesus said to him. But the cure was deferred. The madman cried out, " Torment me not." Then Jesus asked, " What is thy name ? " That is of more significance than we realize, for to know a person's name in the East is thought to give power over the person. Jesus in effect says to the madman, " Trust me." In reply the madman cries out, " My name is Legion." Some authorities suggest that in this answer the man is giving the original cause of his madness : it was due to a shock he had suffered at the hands of the Roman Legion, notorious for cruelty. Perhaps as a child he had seen some terrible outrage, and had rushed home crying, " Legion, legion." Gradually Jesus got from the man the whole story ; and the very remembering of it, psychologists tell us, would tend to bring him back to normal. No doubt it was the cry of the madman that caused the pigs to stampede, and what more natural than to say that they had caught the spirit of the madman ? (See *It Happened in Palestine*, by Leslie Weatherhead, chapter vi.)

Archaeology has latterly made a marked contribution to our knowledge of the Bible. It has shown that though the details of certain incidents may be exaggerated, yet the main events have a real historical foundation. The familiar story of the Flood is an example. In 1928–29 discoveries were made at Kish near Babylon and at Ur of the Chaldees of deposits left by a great flood. Sir Leonard Woolley, who made the discovery at Ur, gave an account of it that would interest children. The excavators dug a shaft into the earth. For some

distance passing through stratified pottery and rubbish it suddenly reached perfectly clean clay, the texture of which showed that it had been deposited by water. The clay continued for eight feet, and then abruptly gave place to further layers of rubbish, full of stone implements and pottery. The next stage was stiff green clay, which had formed the floor of the marsh inhabited by the first settlers. (Total depth was sixty-two feet.) The deposit of clay is clear evidence of a great flood, and one unparalleled in the history of that part of the world. It is good evidence for the basic truth of the Bible narrative.

Another story that never fails to appeal to the imagination of children is the story of Jericho. Between 1929 and 1931 a great deal of excavating was done there, and many interesting discoveries were made. The walls of Jericho were made of bricks, some of them twenty-two inches long—containing no straw. The foundations of the wall were faulty. There were two walls, the inner one built above—and overhanging—the remains of a much earlier wall, and the outer erected on the very edge of the mound on which the city stood. Houses, like Rahab's, were built astride walls (as was found in the course of excavation). A very slight shock would serve to make the walls collapse; and the mighty shouting of the people gave this shock, with the results reported (Joshua vi. 20). Moreover, in the beginning of the book of Joshua it is told how the waters of the Jordan above Jericho had become dammed up. About sixteen miles above Jericho the river flows between deep clay banks. During the earthquakes in 1927 these banks collapsed, and for more than twenty-four hours no water flowed down the river. Exactly the same thing would appear to have happened in the time of Joshua. This is a striking fact in support of there being a real historical foundation for the famous story. The details may be picturesque, but the walls of Jericho did actually fall flat. The evidence also shows that the city was completely burned with fire, as described in the Bible story. (See *The Bible is True*, by Sir Charles Marston, chapters vi., x., xi.)

Modern medical science, too, has its contribution to make

to the better understanding of the Bible. Many children are familiar with the story of the invading hosts of Sennacherib who, "when they arose early in the morning, behold, they were all dead corpses" (2 Kings xix. 35, 36; but see the whole chapter). In his book, *Leaves from a Surgeon's Case-Book*, James Harpole tells how the same thing happened to the British after they captured Jerusalem in 1917. An attack was launched across the Jordan. After an advance into the mountains of Moab, the British were pushed back into the deadly Jordan valley. The men were not fit, because of the heat, flies, and dust. It was decided to send them back to the rest camp at Jerusalem. Some were sent back there, and in the normal way went to their quarters. Nothing unusual was noticed till next morning when half of them were found dead. It was discovered that they had been smitten by malignant malaria, "The Angel of the Lord." The change of temperature in passing from the Jordan to Jerusalem had so weakened the men that they fell easy victims to the disease. Probably the same malarial disease changed history in the time of Hezekiah.

Not improbably, then, some of the happenings that are described so vividly as supernatural, were in reality natural. In the story of the plagues may be mirrored some of the natural phenomena of Egypt. The locusts, the Nile turned the colour of blood by decayed vegetation, the sandstorm bringing darkness over all the land, are examples. The cloud by day and the pillar of fire by night might be a description of the smoking cone of a volcano, and the glow from it reflected in the night sky. It is not always doing justice to the Bible story to look for, and even insist on a miraculous interpretation. This is true of the New Testament as of the Old. For instance, Jesus said that Jairus's daughter was not dead, but asleep. The noisy household assumed she was dead, but are we quite sure that Jesus did not really mean what he said on that occasion? (See Mark v. 21 to the end.) There is another example in the story of Paul at Troas. The people were sure that Eutychus was killed by his fall. Paul said he was still alive, and took care of him, and he revived. Yet it is often said that Paul raised him from the dead. In many stories there is the minimum of

detail, and it is by no means certain in any particular case that the writer intended to convey that it was a miracle.

By careful study it is also possible to build up from chance references detailed stories of the lives of people about whom there is no direct evidence. An example is that of John Mark. The Gospel that bears his name contains no direct statement about the author. In Christian tradition the book has always been associated with John Mark, who it is said wrote down faithfully all that he had learnt from Peter. However, in Mark xiv. 51, 52, a curious incident is described. When Jesus was arrested in the Garden of Gethsemane the soldiers suddenly saw a young man following at a distance among the trees. They gave chase but he just succeeded in escaping, though he had to leave his cloak in the pursuers' hands. The incident, it has been suggested, has little point unless the young man was John Mark himself, and this is his way of signing the Gospel. If that is true the following reconstruction is possible. John Mark and his mother had a house at Jerusalem (Acts xii. 12). It was to their house very probably that Jesus came with his disciples for the Last Supper. Perhaps John Mark was the young man with the pitcher who gave the signal earlier in the day. That evening when Jesus and His disciples left he determined to follow them to see what was going to happen. He came to the Garden of Gethsemane and saw Jesus go a little way from the disciples, who fell asleep. Mark did not sleep, but watched and listened. He it was who heard Jesus' prayer, and later gave such a wonderful record of it in his Gospel. Then he saw the soldiers with their lanterns and staves come into the garden and take Jesus. He followed, dodging from tree to tree, and when he was seen only narrowly escaped capture. Perhaps it was at his house, too, that the disciples had their mystic experience of Christ's presence after the Resurrection.

The Gospels and all the other books of the Bible are historical writings, which should be studied in the same way and with the same care as other ancient documents. The story of how the Gospels came to be written has been pieced together by modern scholars. It is a fascinating one. It is clear

that the first three Gospels stand together and have a great deal in common. The fourth Gospel stands apart. Careful examination of the first three shows that Mark is the earliest, and that Matthew and Luke, while they each draw on other material, use Mark's Gospel as the foundation of their own. For the first thirty years of the Christian Church vivid stories were told by eye-witnesses of what Jesus had done and said; and it would seem that some collections of sayings were written down, though none has survived. As the years passed the number of eye-witnesses dwindled, and the need arose for some authoritative record of Christ's life. Tradition says that Mark was the friend of Peter and after Peter's death wrote down in order all that Peter had told him. Later Luke wrote his two-volume story of the beginnings of Christianity—the Gospel of St. Luke and the Acts of the Apostles. At about the same time the Gospel that bears the name of Matthew was written. These two writers based their story on Mark's Gospel with regard to the main events, but introduced various accounts of happenings and sayings from other sources. One of the most famous of these sources, which was apparently used by both of them and included the Lord's Prayer and much of the Sermon on the Mount, is known as Q. No part of it has survived independently, but it can be reconstructed to some extent from the sections that Matthew and Luke have in common, but which do not occur in Mark. On the whole, it is true to say that the first three Gospels tell the story of what Christ taught and did as matters of history. The fourth Gospel is more concerned with the philosophical meaning of Christ's life, "The Word made Flesh."

The positive result of all the Bible study of the last hundred years is that the main fabric of Bible history and the Gospel story is substantiated. The personalities of the Old Testament stand out more vividly. The Prophetic message is seen to be the kernel of the Old Testament in a way not sufficiently recognized before. The personages are real people with an abiding faith in God. Their strong and authoritative "Thus saith the Lord" sometimes gives the impression that God spoke to them in a special and direct way which He no longer

employs to-day. That idea is erroneous. Professor Kennett used to say in vivid lectures at Cambridge that the Hebrew speaker did not say "I thought." "The Word of the Lord came to me," or "Thus saith the Lord" is the Hebrew expression for "I think this is the Lord's Will," or "I think this is what the Lord says." The personal conviction of the writer is what is really stated. One of the inspiring things about the Bible is that its heroes are convincingly human. There is no attempt to whitewash them as in the stories of later Christian saints. Their faults are given as well as their virtues. They stand as real people with a living faith in God. It is the same in the New Testament. The originality of Jesus is brought out clearly by the modern study of the Gospels. The effort to understand does not lessen wonder and respect, rather it increases them. Nor by seeking to understand the Bible better are we bringing God down to our level. We realize that we cannot understand all His work, but by trying to do so we may perhaps lift ourselves a little more into His presence. The modern world needs a living faith in a living God who acts and plans and speaks just as in the times of the Bible. It is just this living faith that recent Biblical study is restoring.

Recommended Books

Archaeology and the Bible. G. A. Barton. (American Sunday School Union)

The Bible comes Alive. C. Marston. (Eyre & Spottiswoode)

The Bible is True. C. Marston. (Eyre & Spottiswoode)

Bible and Spade. S. L. Caiger. (Oxford University Press)

Digging up the Past. Sir Leonard Woolley. (Cape, and Pelican Books)

Folklore in the Old Testament. J. G. Frazer. (Macmillan)

The Historical Background of the Bible. J. N. Schofield. (Nelson)

The Inspiration of the Bible. R. H. Malden. (Oxford University Press)

Let's Look at the Bible! Canon Basil Redlich. (Nelson)

The New Testament in the Twentieth Century. M. Jones. (Macmillan)

New Testament Problems. W. K. Lowther Clarke. (S.P.C.K.)

Old Testament in the Light of Anthropology. E. O. James. (S.P.C.K.)

Our Bible in the Making. J. Paterson Smyth. (Sampson Low)

Problems of the New Testament To-day. R. H. Malden. (Oxford University Press)

The Religious Background of the Bible. J. N. Schofield. (Nelson)

The Riddle of the New Testament. Hoskyns and Davey. (Faber & Faber)

Ur of the Chaldees. Sir Leonard Woolley. (Cape, and Pelican Books)

What is the Old Testament? C. R. Smith. (Epworth Press)

Chapter V

THE OLD TESTAMENT

Before discussing methods of teaching, it is pertinent to inquire exactly what the Old Testament is and for what purpose it was written, for only such understanding will enable the teacher to implant its essential truths in the minds of his pupils.

It was written for a people who were very simple in their mode of life and religious experience, who were unaccustomed to the use of written books, but who were steeped in folklore passed down from father to son for many generations. For these reasons it is not, and was never intended to be, a scientific treatise, or even a philosophical discourse. Enshrined in its pages are profound religious and philosophical truths, but presented to a primitive people in the way best understood by them, through concrete situations and living personages.

Further, it is not a contemporary narrative. Many of the events recounted had occurred hundreds of years before the written version was made, and so its historical accuracy is often doubtful. Having been written by many hands at widely different periods, it suffers from the defect, from the historical point of view, of sometimes giving markedly varying accounts of the same episode. The amazing thing is that being compiled in this way it should be so substantially accurate.

What, then, is the purpose of this collection of books, which is not a contemporary record, and which is not always historically accurate? Its purpose is twofold, first to tell the story of a progressive religious revelation, and second to unfold the promise of the Messiah—both very difficult tasks in relation to a primitive people whose idea of a monotheistic religion was rudimentary, and who were surrounded by tribes worshipping not one but many gods.

So that they would be quite sure to be understood, the religious and philosophical truths concerning the one God

were presented in a variety of ways suitable to the people's religious development and the conditions under which they lived. Use was made of myth, legend, fiction, poetry, and historical narrative. The religious truths conveyed in the Old Testament are universally true, but the vehicle by which they are conveyed belongs to its period and place.

The use of myths in the Old Testament is not extensive, and is chiefly confined to the early chapters of Genesis, viz. the stories of the Creation, of Adam and Eve, of the sons of God and the sons of man, and of the Tower of Babel. Myths of this type have their counterpart in the mythology of other races. For example, the story of the Tower of Babel has analogies with the Greek myth of the Titans who tried to reach the gods on Mount Olympus by piling Pelion on Ossa. Though the story of the Flood appears in the mythology of many nations, and may be purely mythical in origin, there is archæological evidence that parts of Mesopotamia were once submerged by a great flood. What is chiefly interesting is the use the prophetic writers have made of these myths in the teaching of religious truths, for in this use they differ considerably from the main religious teachers of other nations. The Creation story is more than pure mythology, because it conveys the lesson that in the beginning was God, who created all things. People therefore who criticize this story as scientifically untenable are quite beside the point, for it was never intended as a scientific account of the creation. But as a vehicle of religious teaching for a primitive people it is incomparable.

Of legend the use made in the Old Testament is considerable. Legends differ from myths in the fact that whilst myths are totally imaginary, legends are at least partly founded on or associated with historical fact. Sometimes the legend is an imaginary story which has grown round an historic personage, as with the story of King Alfred and the burning of the cakes ; at others it is a story of historical events to which the names of persons have become attached. Research scholars at work on the Bible stories are discovering more and more, as fresh archæological and other evidence is brought to light, that many of the so-called Biblical myths are in fact legends

with a substantial historical foundation. The story of the Patriarchs is probably legendary, but the writers were using legends well known to the people as a means of conveying religious lessons.

Gradually the legends shade off into actual history, and from the time of David the Old Testament is usually historically sound, although certain legends, like those of Elijah and Elisha, do appear. Even in the historically accurate portions of the Old Testament the chief aim is not the historical authenticity of the story but its religious significance.

Many people fail to realize that the Old Testament equally with the New contains parables ; and such are pure inventions. Examples of these are the parables of Jotham and Nathan, and probably the story of Jonah (although Jonah himself is an historical figure).

Finally, the Old Testament contains poems of great beauty, like the Psalms.

When teaching any story in the Old Testament the teacher must bear these distinctions in mind. Having read the story he must assure himself that he is certain of its religious significance; it may mark the religious development of the Israelites at that particular period, convey a simple religious truth, or form a part of the Messianic revelation. In doubtful cases closer study of the passage and consultation of a good commentary will reveal whether the story is myth, legend, history, parable, or poem.

The Old Testament tends to be more difficult to teach than the New, because the teacher has to deal with a revelation of God which is often only partially understood by the writers themselves ; and he must be quite certain of his ground before facing the class. Merely to retail the story to the class is to court disaster, for either questions will be asked which the teacher cannot answer, or the children, whilst accepting the story for the moment, will later begin to doubt its authenticity, and probably at a time when there will be no instructed person by to consult.

The broad essentials of the historical episodes of the Old Testament are true, as present-day research goes more and

more to prove, and as the Bible is intended solely as a religious book, any minor historical inaccuracies do not in the least affect its validity. Moreover, it does not matter fundamentally whether the religious message is conveyed by historical narrative, legend, myth, poetry, or parable, so long as the reader is aware of this fact and realizes the message.

How should the Old Testament be taught to children, and what should be taught about it?

Christianity is a way of life, but it is a mistake to suppose that one can practise Christianity fully without a sufficient knowledge of how it developed; and for this end the New Testament is not enough. Many of Our Lord's actions and words are intelligible only in the light of Old Testament prophecy. Not only so, but a practising Christian must be able to withstand the onslaught of critics whose attacks often take the form of questioning the Bible story, particularly as regards the Old Testament. Further, Senior School children have already heard some of the Old Testament stories either in the Junior School or at Sunday School. Quite rightly the teacher made little attempt at that stage to explain the significance of the stories, to connect them into a continuous narrative, or to differentiate between myth, legend, and history. These children are now growing up, asking questions, and hearing their elders at home put such queries as:

> Why should God be a "jealous" God?
> Why did God tell the people of Israel to kill their enemies?
> How could the cruel God of the flood and the plagues change to become the father of Jesus Christ?
> How did God write the ten commandments?

For these reasons it is necessary for the children to know some of the Old Testament stories. But time is short and the New Testament must claim the major portion of what is available. The teacher will only have time to go over the main outline once, and must altogether omit subordinate matters however interesting. For the purpose of this outline he must select passages extending from Genesis to the last book of the

Apocrypha, taking care that they can be linked together clearly. There will be three themes running through the narrative :

(1) The story of the gradual revelation of God to man, in which it should be pointed out to the children that it is not God who has changed but man's ideas of God which have developed as he has become more capable of receiving the progressive revelation. Children often ask why the God of the Old Testament appears so cruel and vindictive, but if the story is properly told they will realize that here was a nation surrounded by warlike tribes, depending for its very existence on the ability to fight and defend itself. The whole history of this period is one of fighting and bloodshed ; the one means of settling arguments was the sword. Peoples living under such conditions could not hope to understand the idea of a God of mercy and love ; in fact, we do not fully understand it to-day. Old Testament writers naturally were men of their own day and generation. Although they could see further than their fellows, they were still only in possession of part of the revelation. What is remarkable, and should be pointed out to the children, is that the moral standards of the Israelites, in spite of many backslidings, were immeasurably higher than those of the surrounding nations, whose social culture was in many instances in advance of theirs.

When dealing with this progressive revelation the teacher must beware lest he fall into the error of supposing that the Old Testament books are arranged in chronological order. The prophetic writers responsible for the compiling of the Pentateuch showed the early stages of the progressive revelation, but in parts their writings are coloured with their own experience of a later stage.

Theological explanation is wearisome to children, and great care is required in this aspect of the work to ensure that they do not become confused. A stream children should see quite readily the progressive nature of the revelation. The B stream should understand how the Israelites' ideas of God changed as they themselves became more civilized. This aspect is best omitted with the C stream.

(2) The Messianic Hope runs like a thread through the whole

of the Bible narrative, becoming more pronounced in the Prophetic books. There is not time, nor indeed would it be wise, to deal with all the references to the coming of the Messiah, but in the course of the outline several of them should be included. One plan is to collect the passages from St. Matthew which refer to the fulfilment of these prophecies and allude to them as each prophetic utterance occurs in the Old Testament. That will be sufficient to demonstrate to the children by actual reference that this hope of a Saviour was a reality in Jewish life. (3) Progressive revelation of the nature of God goes hand in hand with the growth of the Jewish nation, and the story of the latter will form the main theme. This is not only because of its value as a background to the New Testament, but also because of the inspiring nature of much of it. Children should not have inflicted on them the accounts of the long and complicated wars attendant on the entry into the Promised Land ; indeed, throughout the teaching the narrative should be kept simple and direct.

One other thing requires close attention, particularly with the B and C streams. The outline will include biographies of the great heroes, and these should be stressed for their inspirational value. In this connection it is well to remember that most of the children will already be familiar with the lives of Abraham, Moses, Joseph, Jacob, Joshua, Saul, David, Samuel, and other earlier figures, but the lives of the later prophets will be almost unknown to them. When talking to youngsters who have left school one often discovers that there is a gap in their knowledge of the Bible, frequently stretching from the time of Solomon to the birth of Christ. To omit this part of the outline is to deprive the children of some of the most thrilling stories of all. Chief attention should be directed to the lives of Amos, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Haggai, and Zechariah.

Children will thus hear a connected and continuous story of the growth of the Jewish nation, including the biographies of the chief Old Testament heroes, with references at various points to the gradual revelation of the nature of God, and to the growth of the Messianic hope.

Even if the scheme of Old Testament study were to end at this point, the children would have learnt sufficient to cope with many of the New Testament problems. Not only so, but a record such as this, of human effort and endeavour, success and failure, triumph and overwhelming disaster, could not but have happily influenced and inspired its hearers. Many of the stories lie close to the problems of the children themselves, of their constant struggle to fight on the side of God ; and by having seen how these Old Testament figures reacted to their trials they may have gained strength and direction for their own lives.

In many schools, however, particularly in the A stream classes, it will be found that the above scheme will have been covered before the end of the session, and that therefore further teaching can be undertaken. The Old Testament stories are more than the history of a people, or even the history of a revelation : they contain the inspired word of God speaking through man. Inspiration may not be confined to the Bible, but the number of inspired works is so small that it is unfortunate if use is not made of the directly instructional element in the Old Testament. The stories themselves, as previously remarked, can provide instruction, but there are certain passages that are particularly rich in inspiring power, and these should be closely studied. Individual and unconnected passages could be used, but it is better to choose a theme suited to the age and capacity of the class, and to illustrate it by a number of linked passages. Care must be exercised in handling each of these to show the precise point the revelation of God has reached. When dealing with the Old Testament in this way it is useful to make frequent citations of New Testament passages, and to refer to as many modern utterances and incidents as possible. The Ten Commandments form a typical passage for this treatment, as they can be intimately linked with the New Testament and with modern life. The method of doing so is well illustrated in the West Riding Syllabus, pages 65–68. Other themes, more suitable for the higher classes, are :

How faith in God helped Old Testament characters
The problem of suffering as presented in the book of Job
Patriotism and the Maccabees
God in the life of a nation—the Prophets

Before choosing a topic of this kind teachers should study the needs of their children and suit the topic to those needs. It should not then be difficult to discover appropriate material to use in connection with it.

There remain the Poetic Books of the Old Testament, which may be studied for their inspirational value. Care should be taken that this is made the real aim, for many of these passages have great beauty, and whilst the study of literature is of high cultural value, literary appreciation is not the aim of these lessons. Old Testament passages may on occasion be studied in the A stream classes directly for their literary value alone, but as pointed out in another part of this book, the proper place for this study is the English, not the Religious Instruction, period. Even the C stream classes can appreciate a simple passage like Psalm 23. Other psalms might be chosen as follows :

Penitence	51
Prayer	4, 6
Thanksgiving	136
Praise	147, 148, 149, 150
Trust in God	23, 91

However much time is devoted to the study of the Old Testament, it must be constantly borne in mind that the most important part of the whole course is the New Testament, and that the Christian record must also be continued up to modern times. The story of the growth of the Jewish nation and the revelation of God from the beginning to the time of Christ is only taught to obtain a complete picture of the Christian scene ; it is not the main story. All of it can be made inspirational, and so the independent, instructional topics should be added only if the teacher is certain that there will be no neglect of the later parts of the scheme.

Recommended Books

Concerning the Bible. Conrad Skinner. (Sampson Low)
Guide to Understanding of the Old Testament. J. E. McFadyen. (James Clark)
Introduction to the Books of the Old Testament. Oesterley and Robinson. (Oxford University Press)
Introduction to Old Testament Study. Canon Basil Redlich. (Macmillan)
Our Bible in the Making. J. Paterson Smyth. (Sampson Low)
What is the Old Testament? C. R. Smith. (Epworth Press)

Chapter VI

THE NEW TESTAMENT

The New Testament is the most important part of the syllabus, for in it is enshrined the life and teaching of Christ. For this reason the teacher should give it special attention, and take great pains to avoid certain pitfalls to which the teaching of it is liable.

The revelation of God to the Jews in the Old Testament was a gradual process, and one is sometimes led to think that with the advent of Jesus Christ the ever-widening stream of revelation suddenly reached its maximum flow. The mission of Jesus certainly increased the flow, but He, like the prophets before him, realized that even yet the Jewish people were not prepared for the full flood. As it was, some men were swept off their feet by the sudden increase of the flood, and took long to regain a firm footing. The New Testament stories tell of the coming of the Messiah, and the careful, patient leading of His people to a greater understanding of God. The patience of this leading is seen in the gradualness of the revelation that God is the God equally of Gentile and of Jew—a truth still not realized by some of His followers even after the Ascension.

Care must be taken, however, that the historical aspect is not allowed to displace the spiritual. When teaching the story of Our Lord's life the following important considerations should be borne in mind :

(1) Although the lapse of time between the enacting of the episodes and their narration in the Gospels was much shorter than with many of the early Old Testament stories it was sufficiently long to make an absolutely accurate account impossible, especially as the writers were often dependent on accounts at second or third hand.

(2) The writers, often quite deliberately and because they put the spiritual value of the story before its historical accuracy,

grouped episodes or speeches independently of time or occasion, and so comparison between the Gospels as to the sequence of events is difficult, and in any case unprofitable so far as children are concerned.

(3) Translations are inherently difficult to make, and both the Authorized and Revised Versions contain obscurities and ambiguities—even the Greek version of Erasmus failed to eradicate obscurities entirely. This difficulty should be pointed out to the children when they encounter obscure statements.

Leaving the finer shades of meaning as a subject of debate for theologians, the teacher will concentrate on the broad sweep of the narrative where the main events are historically true and the spiritual truths are of age-long significance. Jesus Christ as an historic figure, moving, living, and suffering among the people of His day, must be made a real person. Children ought to know and understand the episodes of His life, and everything else in the syllabus should be subordinated to this end. Moved as they are by the narration of heroic lives, it will be well within the powers of a good teacher to awaken the awed thrill belonging to this hero of heroes, who as a peasant lad could challenge the power of the priests and the might of imperial Rome, to become the greatest of world figures.

Pictures and films tend to portray Jesus as passive and melancholy ; and generally in the past too much emphasis has been laid on " the man of sorrows." Then, too, the " love of Jesus " has often been given a mawkish, sentimental turn. Some modern children, particularly boys, who are secretly repelled by the idea of Jesus as what they call a " milksop," and are apt to regard religion as " something for old maids," will openly confess that they are not attracted by the character of Jesus. What they really mean is that they are repelled by the character of the Jesus that has been presented to them. Contact with boys and girls who have left school leads one to the conclusion that perhaps unwittingly there has been too little emphasis on the robustness of Jesus and His message. The Christian evangel has lost the dynamic appeal and call

to adventure which were characteristic of the early Church ; and the greatest work that teachers can perform to-day is to sound this stirring note of action. The message is there ; it has only become overlaid with a sticky sentimentality. Re-study the life story of Jesus, see the hardships and the dangers He faced, realise His amazing feats of endurance, grasp the sturdy independence, the pride, fortitude, and cheerful confidence of this amazing man, then let their light illuminate every story that the children hear of Christ the Teacher. Difficult as the task may be, the world needs a call to a fresh crusade. The older generation have weakened in action, so that our hope must be to inspire these young, eager minds with the story of the God who dared risk all things and yet won through. Studied from this angle, the story takes on quite a different aspect.

An opposite danger should, however, be noted : that of presenting Jesus as a species of swaggering buccaneer. Having emphasised the manliness of Our Lord, we should point out that He was not robust only, but though he never tolerated false sentiment or hypocrisy, was gentle and sympathetic when the occasion demanded.

Children should learn the facts of our Lord's life, and be always directed to the Christian virtues as expressed in action. Moralising is dangerous, particularly with children, but they do not resent it so long as it includes a call to activity. Lord Baden-Powell showed his understanding of children when he called on Boy Scouts " to be active in doing good, not passive in being good."

It may well be that among the children in a particular school there will be some suffering from ill-health or physical defects. Jesus depicted as a man of robust vigour who would delight in a keen game of football or hockey, may not attract them, and if, as is often the case, they are of a sensitive nature, may cause them acute mental suffering. The majority of children are attracted by health and strength, but the rule of the majority cannot hold sway in this case. Our Lord's work was carried out successfully not so much through the robustness of His physique as through His fearless temperament and ardent

mind. It was an attitude to life. Christianity demands a fearless spirit, not a perfect physique, and pains should be taken to see that this is always emphasized.

As the story unfolds it should be illustrated by modern examples. Jesus lived His earthly life nearly two thousand years ago, and His actions were those of His day, but His methods are applicable to all ages. It is not enough to tell children that they can be like Jesus, even like the heroic figure the teacher is trying to portray: they should hear and read the stories of people of our own time who have lived selflessly heroic lives. Readers will find that this aspect of teaching the Christian story is stressed throughout the present book as of paramount importance, but care should be taken in choosing the examples to see that wherever possible they are not only modern but quite recent. Stories of the saints and heroes of the Church have great value, but a tale grips children far more if it can be prefaced by, "This happened a year or two ago," or ideally, "This man or woman is living to-day." A collection of suitable stories might be built up by the following means:

(*a*) A scrutiny could be made of the many books containing stories of noble lives, and the contemporary lives selected, *e.g.* Kagawa, Liddell, Aggrey.
(*b*) The teacher could review his own personal experience. In the course of his life he will have met men and women whose deeds might well be told to the children as examples worthy to follow.
(*c*) Cuttings could be made from newspapers which often contain tales of heroism.

During the New Testament course some of the miracles of our Lord will be taught. Their presentation to children of this age is not easy as the children will almost certainly ask a host of questions dealing with their authenticity and their application to modern thought. Miracles are in some cases capable of scientific explanation, but it must be remembered, and pointed out to the children, that Jesus was God as well as man. If we believe in the divinity of Christ, which is the foundation stone of the Christian faith and all its teaching, we must agree

that there is a definite place for the miraculous in the story of Christ's life. Science is the handmaid of religion, not its master, and in spite of, and sometimes because of, the advance of scientific research, the fact of Divine intervention remains a real thing at the present day. Unfortunately the study of this subject is so overlaid by quackery and credulity that many people are dubious of it, but there are numerous well authenticated examples of occurrences that cannot be explained otherwise than as the direct intervention of God. Experienced medical men do not hesitate to quote examples, and as one hard-bitten old doctor was wont to say, " God and myself have worked many a miracle." In so thorny a matter the teacher will walk warily, but he is justified in telling his pupils that some of the miracles undoubtedly show God working directly through His Son. The greatest miracle of all is the fact that " the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us."

Bearing this in mind the teacher should study the problem of each miracle individually, and decide which miracles are capable of an explanation easily understood by children, and which should be presented as entirely miraculous.

(Further discussion on this problem will be found in the chapter on Biblical Criticism.)

Two years at the most will serve to cover this course with the A and B groups, but with certain of the C group children it will be better to devote the whole of the time available in the three or four years. C stream children require a longer period in which to assimilate the material, and even if they thoroughly cover only this portion of the scheme they will have learnt the basic truths of Christianity and gained an inspiration that will affect their whole attitude to life.

Some teachers prefer to take St. Mark's Gospel first, and then to fortify the children's knowledge by re-telling the story by means of extracts from the other Gospels. Others prefer to take a longer period over the first survey, and include in it examples from all four Gospels. Methods will vary, but so long as the children gain a thorough grasp of our Lord's life this does not matter.

As the scheme opens with the First Year pupils the events

of our Lord's life will take precedence over His message, although there is no reason why the simpler teachings, together with a selection of miracles and parables, should not find a place. Without these, indeed, the story might seem pointless and without unity. There will, however, be certain aspects of His teaching which will be definitely deferred until the later part of the course. Particular schools will select their programme according to their special needs, but helpful suggestions will be found in Chapter VIII and in the many Agreed Syllabuses that are now published.

Following the Gospel stories will come the history of the Early Church after Christ's Ascension ; and it will be pointed out that although Jesus was no longer physically present, His real presence was still with His people, and the Holy Ghost was working through the Church. As St. Paul declared, Christians still lived in direct contact with God through the Holy Spirit. A new stage in the story is thus reached. First, there was the gradual revelation of God in the Old Testament, second, the fulfilment of the Messianic Hope with the revelation of God in the person of Jesus Christ, and third, the revelation spreading through the world by men imbued with the Holy Spirit and conscious of the ever-present Christ. The occasion should be taken to recall to the children the fundamental truth of Christianity, namely, that God works through men, and because Christ is working in them and through them " all things are possible."

When dealing with the history of the Early Church as given in the Acts the teacher sometimes makes the mistake of taking the text verse by verse and chapter by chapter. The unfortunate result is that, passages being included that are unnecessary for children at this stage and too difficult in any case, the story becomes dull and even wearisome to them. The Acts should not be studied alone, for many passages relevant to the story of the Early Church are to be found in the Epistles. Complete omission of the Epistles, which are known to have been written by St. Paul, is unfortunate because they contain some of the finest teaching material in the New

Testament. Unfortunately in the course of four, still less three, years, it is impossible to deal with all the inspirational literature of the Bible, and time is not available to be spent on a detailed study of the Epistles even if it were desirable ; but by citing relevant passages during the study of the Acts the teacher can familiarise the children with some of the text of the Epistles, and possibly open the way to a later reading. At least he will thus ensure that his pupil's Biblical knowledge does not stop short at the last chapter of the Acts, as is so often the case.

The story of the Early Church will, then, although taught on a plan, be episodic, and it will include some reference to relevant parts of the Epistles. Bearing this in mind the teacher will now ask himself what is the salient point to remember throughout the lessons. It is that all the Christian participants in the story felt that God was really with them, and that Christ, through the Holy Ghost, was their ever-present help. It was this consciousness of the presence of Christ which made possible the heroic lives of the Early Christians, and which is to-day still working in men's hearts and lives.

To face hardships and opposition unflinchingly is one lesson from this work. A second is to work happily together. Whatever the dangers and difficulties the chief figures " never forgot to be kind." Stories of generous actions are abundant : the young churches helping their less fortunate brethren, Paul sending help to Jerusalem, and men and women sheltering Paul and his followers from the anger of the mob, even at the risk of their own lives. The Early Christians would appear to have had a greater realisation of the true meaning of Christian service than their modern brethren, and indeed the organisation of some Christian societies was almost that of an equalitarian community.

Great movements often owe their success to the help and patronage of influential people, but the success of the greatest movement of all was in the main due to the work of men and women of quite ordinary position, sometimes even of the depressed classes. Christianity calls all men, and those with few intellectual gifts or no social position can bear as great a

share in its work as the highest in the land. Indeed, the attempted suppression of the Christian religion issued from the most influential groups in the state. Success at first appeared to be theirs, but finally even the might of the Roman Cæsar failed before the stubborn will of the " little men."

Christ the Dauntless, Christ the Heroic, was the theme of the Gospels ; in the Acts the theme is the heroism of those who first followed in His footsteps.

Keeping the above ideas in mind the teacher will select appropriate episodes to form the high lights of the story. The Ascension of Christ was followed by a waiting period when the frightened disciples dared not start their mission, but hid themselves away in the Upper Room. Then came Pentecost. What physical phenomena occurred it is difficult to say, but it should be noted that the narrative speaks of " cloven tongues like as of fire." What really matters is that the inbreathing of the Holy Ghost impelled these men to cast away their cowardice and face their task. After the descent of the Holy Spirit came, as it were, the first fruits of this new-found courage, the election of Matthias to make up the number, the speeches of Peter and others, the occurrence of miracles, and finally Peter and John's testimony before the Sanhedrin. Children will probably ask for an explanation of the " speaking with other tongues." Many authorities think that it was " Glossolalia," a kind of ecstatic babbling. This was not unknown in certain religious sects when the members laboured under the influence of intense emotion, and further instances were known amongst the Early Christians, Paul in his Epistle to the Corinthians even giving a warning against the danger of it. What might have happened was that the Apostles spoke in Greek, because it was the likeliest language to be widely understood by the crowd, but they would not at any time speak it fluently or correctly, and under the stress of their recent experience they would speak it particularly badly—to the point of an accusation of drunkenness. But after all, whatever the cause, it is the religious significance of the story that is important.

Having dealt with the actions of the Infant Church the teacher will next show something of its corporate life, as given

shortly in Acts ii. This, if the teacher so wishes, may be expanded by other references, so that in the later stages of the course the life and organisation of the Church will be fully understood. Some teachers prefer, however, to leave details until after the story of Paul's missionary journeys has been told.

Those who wish to include the relevant Church history in some part of their syllabus will find the following references useful :

Foundations of the Faith

Romans x. 9 ; vi. 4 ; xv. 13. Phil. ii. 11, 6–9
1 Cor. xii. 3 ; i. 23–25 ; xv. 1–11 ; ii. 1–5

Behaviour

2 Tim. ii. 14–16. Heb. xii. 1–17. Rom. iv. 1–12

Appointment of Elders

Acts xx. 17, 27–28. Titus i. 5, 7, 9. 1 Peter v. 1–2
1 Tim. iv. 14

Appointment of Deacons

Acts vi. Phil. i. 1. 1 Tim. iii. 8–13

Baptism

Acts ii. 37–41 ; viii. 9–13, 36–38 ; x. 44–48 ;
xvi. 15, 32–33 ; xviii. 8 ; xix. 1–7
Rom. vi. 3–4. 1 Cor. xii. 13. 1 Peter iii. 21

Laying on of Hands

Acts viii. 17 ; xix. 6

The Lord's Supper

Acts ii. 42, 46 ; xx. 7–12. 1 Cor. xi. 23–26

Ordination

Acts i. 15–16, 22–23 ; vi. 6 ; xiv. 23 ; xx. 17, 28 ; xiii. 3
1 Tim. iv. 14. 2 Tim. i. 6

Sooner or later the crisis was bound to come, for it was obvious that the priests were strongly opposed to the new order ; and not unexpectedly this took the form of the trial and martyrdom of Stephen, when the persecution of the Christians began. Stephen had had a true conception of the universal Church for all Gentiles. Happily the rise of persecution and the flight

of Christians from Jerusalem did not lead to the downfall of the Church, but led instead to an increase of its missionary enthusiasm and of the numbers of the community; and the Apostles became finally convinced that the Church must accept Gentiles to full membership and fellowship.

The rest of the Acts contains the story of Paul, his conversion, and of how he and his fellows steadily pushed forward their missionary campaign until at length they reached the Imperial City itself. In teaching this the temptation to include too much detail should be resisted, for the story should have a continuous flow. Points to bear in mind in dealing with the journeys are:

(1) *The heroic character of its chief participant, Paul.*

Probably no other story in the Bible, with the exception of our Lord's, is so moving as this of the man who was the first missionary to the Gentile world, and who overcame all manner of hardships until at last he attained his goal.

Those teachers who wish to give the children at this stage further facts about the Apostle may find these references useful:

Paul was a Jew of Tarsus (Acts xxi. 39). Born probably in the year A.D. 3 (Phil. iii. 5) he could not have been less than thirty years of age on his first appearance in the story, as he was apparently a member of the Sanhedrin. (In Acts vii. 58 he is, however, referred to as a young man.) His father was a Roman citizen, a Pharisee of the tribe of Benjamin, who lived in Tarsus where Paul had learnt the trade of tent-making (Acts xxiii. 6; xxii. 28; xviii. 3–4). Paul was educated at Jerusalem under Gamaliel (Acts xxii. 3).

Additional references will be found in several excellent books on St. Paul, listed at the end of this chapter.

(2) *Paul was preaching a universal gospel directed to all types of people.*

Whenever possible Paul preached first in the Jewish synagogues, and only when he was rejected did he turn elsewhere for converts. (Children will be interested to know why the Jews were spread so widely over Asia Minor.)

Although the Jews had a religion of which they were

intensely proud, and which the best of them practised assiduously, the same could not be said of the rest of the Mediterranean world. In religion it was the age of sceptics. The Greeks, though steeped in mystery cults and philosophy, were yet unsatisfied. Neither Stoics nor Epicureans, with their strongly materialistic views, had a satisfactory answer to the hidden craving for a real God. The golden age of Greece had passed, leaving a void. Even to the Greeks of Athens, with their argumentative temperament and love of discussion, the Christian message had something to give, offering to men's souls a satisfaction not to be found in all their philosophy.

At Corinth, with its mixture of races and its sordid commercial enterprise, Greek culture was even more debased. The gibe " to live like a Corinthian " was used to describe those people whose licentious mode of life was a scandal to their fellows. Though morality was at a low ebb, even here the Christian message had its appeal.

Similarly in Ephesus, with its great temple to Artemis, goddess of fertility, and its constant tumult and unrest, some received the message. Indeed the church at Ephesus became a stronghold of Christianity.

Rome was in little better state than Greece. In spite of her laws and the apparent discipline of her armies she was rotten at heart, for her soul had gone. Her religion was a laughing stock amongst the sophisticated ruling classes, and the cult of worshipping the emperor as god was practised only as an expedient and not with belief.

So Paul at last reached his goal; the universal gospel, starting at Jerusalem, was carried to the Imperial City where it bore its message of hope to a people despairingly seeking salvation. Paul's work was done, but he had built well: Jews and Gentiles, rich and poor, had heard the Gospel, and the Church was growing fast into a power in the land. The story that had begun at Genesis was carried a mighty step forward.

Children will by this stage have received a thorough grounding in the essentials of the New Testament. Jesus, His life, and His teaching will have been considered, and the

story continued up to the firm establishment of the Christian Church. The ground covered will have included the Gospels, the Acts of the Apostles, and relevant passages from the Epistles. Thoroughly taught, this part of the scheme will prove of ample scope, but if teachers so wish, the brighter pupils, particularly those taking a four-years' course, might engage in a short study of the Epistles. It would be impossible, and it is unnecessary, to go through the selected Epistles verse by verse; instead a simple related scheme should be devised. Two of the best of such schemes, linking up the whole New Testament, will be found in the Cambridgeshire Syllabus, pages 73–79. The special passages for study are:

Rom. xii; xiii
1 Cor. xi–xiii; xv
Eph. iii. 14–21; iv; vi. 10–20
Heb. xi–xiii. 4
James i–iii 12
1 John iii; iv. 7–21
Rev. iv; vii; xxi; xxii

During their three- or four-years' course the pupils will have been introduced to all the books of the Bible which are necessary to an elementary understanding of the Christian story. The brighter scholars will have undertaken a more detailed study, and have included additional passages from St. John's Gospel.

In the New Testament there still remains the Book of Revelation. Because of the difficulties it presents, many teachers consider that it is better omitted from children's courses of study. The present writer has frequently stated that children should be encouraged to read the Bible for themselves and to ask questions. As a rule, when left alone they turn to those portions of the Bible which have not been covered in the syllabus. Questions on the Old Testament portions usually concern items of Jewish law or else long genealogical tables, and can be fairly directly answered or dismissed. The children readily understand that it is impossible, in so short a time as three or four years, to deal with the whole Bible, and that such portions as are of interest only to theologians

and other biblical scholars are best omitted. But the Book of Revelation is rather different, for intelligent children, seeing this as the final section of the Bible, and having been told that the Bible record is continuous from Genesis, wonder why this book should be so different from all the others. The stories contained in it are quite different from those in the rest of the New Testament, and tell of dragons and cities, angels and devils. What can it all be about? For close school study the Book of Revelation is impossible, but if one is to be fair to the pupils, particularly if they ask questions, some explanation, however short, must be given. If they have been introduced to the Book of Daniel when dealing with the Maccabees they will readily understand that this is another of the Apocalyptic writings. Written by an unknown author, it belongs probably to the time of Domitian's persecution, A.D. 95, and therefore the place for its study is in the section of the syllabus dealing with the Church after the Acts. The writer was not making prophecies for fulfilment, but living at a time of severe persecution, and regarding matters as so bad that they could only be righted by Divine intervention, he was giving expression to a passionate hope or dream. He represents the message as received through visual revelation, and he clothes it in symbolic imagery. For a useful analysis see the explanations to *A Short Bible*, by Bezzant (Blackwell).

Throughout the teaching of the Acts opportunities should be taken for correlation with modern times; thus the missionary portions can best be illustrated by stories of the mission field to-day.

Finally, to teach Paul's missionary journeys adequately requires that one deals at some length with the geographical and social background, for if one does not do so the pupil is apt to think that Paul was journeying through jungle tracks, and visiting people who lived in a state of savagery. Care must be taken, however, that the spiritual aspect does not become submerged. Sufficient historical and geographical data could be supplied in one or two lessons at the beginning of the course to cover most of the ground required, leaving a few special points to be dealt with as they arose.

Recommended Books

Brother Saul. Don Byrne. (Sampson Low)
In the Steps of St. Paul. H. V. Morton. (Rich and Cowan)
The Book of Revelation. E. F. Scott. (S.C.M.)
A Life of Jesus. Basil Matthews. (Oxford University Press)
The Making of the New Testament. Bacon. (Home University Library)
The Meaning of Paul for To-day. Dodd. (Allen & Unwin)
New Testament Problems. Lowther. (S.P.C.K.)
The New Testament in the Twentieth Century. M. Jones. (Macmillan)
Paul the Dauntless. Basil Matthews. (Black)
Paul of Tarsus. Glover. (S.C.M.)
Problems of the New Testament To-day. R. H. Malden. (Oxford University Press)
The Quest of the Historical Jesus. A. Schweitzer. (Black)
St. Paul. W. Knox. (Nelson)

Chapter VII

THE GROWTH OF THE CHURCH

Starting with the early revelation of God in the Old Testament, the Christian story has continued in the New Testament with the life of Our Lord and the beginnings of the Church. It now reaches its conclusion in the continued growth of the Church from the Roman period to the present day. Conclusion is probably the wrong word to use, for though the written narrative naturally finishes with the last recorded acts of present-day Christians, the story still continues and its actors are the present generation, including the children themselves. It is through this that the history of the Christian religion should have its major appeal, that far from being the story of dead and gone heroes it is a narrative depending for its continuance upon those who hear it and with its Supreme Hero ever active and willing to assist.

Disjointed items are just as useless in this section of the syllabus as in any other, and the teacher should keep clearly in mind the main objects of his teaching. Knowing these, he will arrange his matter in a series of topics suitably linked together, with the main themes continuing throughout.

The teacher will of course discover other themes for himself, but it is suggested that the following should not be omitted :

(1) *It is still the Story of the Universal Gospel.*—Up to the end of the New Testament, although the Gospel had spread to peoples of different races, it was to peoples linked together, if somewhat loosely, by being subjects of Rome, and in many cases by speaking a common language. Moreover, the Apostles were able to preach to the vast majority of their hearers in Greek, a language which was spoken in most parts of the Mediterranean world. But after its arrival in Rome the Christian message spread to peoples of diverse customs and tongues, and finally to all parts of the world.

To-day the British and Foreign Bible Society prints trans-

lations of the Bible in hundreds[1] of different languages and dialects. This shows the universality of the appeal of the Christian religion compared with other religions, such as Hinduism and Mohammedanism, whose appeal is to the peoples of a restricted area. Christianity, too, has kept its freshness throughout the ages. It is not only universal but ageless. Roman Christians heard the message which affected every act of their life ; modern Christians hear the same message which is still relevant to every aspect of modern life.

(2) *Opposition to Christianity causes it to Grow.*—Quite early in its history Christianity met with cruel persecution which was deliberately designed to stamp it out, if need be by wholesale execution. The result was that more and more converts flocked to the Faith. Time after time through its history the same thing has happened, all attempts to strangle the Church having ended by leaving it in the long run stronger than before. Care should be taken when explaining this to children to see that it does not lead to an attitude of fatalism and inaction, but becomes a call to service. People might be content to say, " It doesn't matter very much what I do, there will always be people who will assume responsibility." Rather they should be urged to say, " I am the direct heir to those heroes of old, and it is my responsibility, whatever the difficulties, to be worthy of their example."

(3) *The Church has made Mistakes.*—This part of the syllabus will be taught to boys and girls of thirteen to fifteen years of age, and they will be very critical of the many failures in the history of the Church. Idealism is marked at this age, and is apt to make children intolerant of the shortcomings of their elders. The children may, however, be tactfully led to profit by knowledge of past failures, and to determine that they themselves will build better. It is important for them to realize that the failures were those of men, not of the faith, which is the perfect universal message of Jesus Christ. It is

[1] In 1942 the Society had published or circulated all or parts of the Bible in 751 different languages. It has distributed over 550 million copies since it was formed in 1804.

the interpretation that is at fault, through the perversity and sinfulness of man.

Children sometimes ask, " If God believes it is best for everybody to be Christians, why doesn't He make everybody Christians, instead of letting them do as they like about it ? " The answer is that God allows each of us to work out his own salvation, but is ready to help if He is allowed ; mankind has freedom of the will. Alternative to the doctrine of freewill would be that of compulsion, and children will quickly realize that a world where no choice was possible would be a very poor place in which to live. The Archbishop of Canterbury expressed the idea in a sentence, during one of his broadcast sermons, when he said that if God put the world right to-morrow men would undo it in a fortnight.

Whilst admitting that the growth of the Church has been hindered by men's weaknesses, the teacher should stress two points. First, that the growth of the Church, in spite of failures, is remarkable, for what has been achieved in two thousand years is nothing less than the building up in most parts of the world of a body of truth and a standard of conduct which have raised men to a higher level. Second, that the Christian religion demands sacrifice, loyalty, and hardship, which many people are afraid to face. The Christian Church has been built by the few who dared to take the risk. Only as more people are prepared to " confess the faith of Christ crucified " will the speed of its growth increase.

(4) *The Church's Heroes are of many Kinds.*—When planning the course, the teacher should include the biographies of many great Christians, though these should not be all of one type. Titles are puzzling to children, and the word " saint " sometimes takes on a wrong association in their minds. Whilst not as a rule questioning the title of the Apostles to be called saints, they are puzzled to know why we refer to St. Francis but not to St. Damien, and why some speak of Joan of Arc and others of St. Joan. Saint, given its widest meaning, means " holy," and in that sense all Christian people are potential saints. It should be pointed out to the child that one section of the Christian Church has a custom whereby certain men and

women, who in its considered opinion have led lives which set an outstandingly good example to their fellows, are given the title of saint. Whether this is a good system or otherwise is not a suitable topic for discussion with children. "Heroes of the Church" is perhaps for children a better name to use than "Saints of the Church," the "heroes" being people who by common consent have helped in spreading the Kingdom of God. Spreading does not always connote missionary work, and with older children a lesson could be usefully spent in discussing by what different means men and women can spread the influence of the Church.

Each topic in the scheme may have one or more heroes selected for treatment as examples, but the chosen figures should be drawn from all classes, and include men and women, boys and girls, of many races, *e.g.*

Missionaries
Augustine
Kagawa
Aggrey
Sunda Singh
Mary Slessor

Teachers
Clement of Alexandria
Bede
Wycliffe
Luther
Calvin
Thomas Aquinas
Wesley
Pusey
Keble

Philanthropists
Elizabeth Fry
Robert Owen
John Howard
Florence Nightingale

Martyrs
Polycarp
Alban
Thomas More
Blandina, the slave girl
Perpetua
Felicitus
Boy martyrs of Uganda

Doctors
Schweitzer
Pasteur
Grenfell
Ross
Somervell

Builders and Architects
The monks
Wren
Lutyens
Scott

Painters and Sculptors
Leonardo da Vinci
Michael Angelo
Raphael
Rubens
Hunt
Eric Gill

Musicians
Bach
Handel
Mozart, *etc.*

Poets
Keats
Wordsworth
Bridges, *etc.*

Topics, some examples of which are given in a later chapter, may be arranged to suit the teacher.

The lessons should not be confined to oral teaching and reading ; other modes should be frequently employed.

Illustrations

History books form a useful general source of illustrations. The Medici Society and the British Museum publish reproductions of most of the works of the great painters. Postcards showing examples of fine craftsmanship can be obtained from the Victoria and Albert Museum. Most missionary societies provide photographs illustrating their activities.

Visits

There is no reason why visits should not be made to abbeys, monasteries, churches, and cathedrals during Religious Instruction periods as during History periods. If when Christianity in the Middle Ages was being discussed a visit could be paid to a cathedral or a monastery, the subject would become much more real to the children. The teaching of the technical details of architecture would not be the aim, for such teaching belongs to the History or Art scheme ; yet architectural matters would not be ruled out. Thus a visit to a cathedral might be conducted as follows :

Before the visit

A brief review of type of architecture, age of building, etc., if not already given in the History lessons.

At the visit

An examination of the architectural features, noting the scrupulous fidelity of the work of the masons, particularly in buildings of later Gothic type. (Norman work will show the care taken by masons using very simple tools.)

A study of the windows and a discussion on how the glass-painters have expressed their spirit of worship.

Observation of choir stalls, screens, etc., and the work of the wood worker.

Should the cathedral possess any beautiful old manuscripts, these should be scrutinized, and the consummate art of the scribe noted.

(It should be remembered that for such visits the permission of the Local Education Authority is usually required, and that the instruction should be non-sectarian.)

In the later part of the scheme visits may be paid to hospitals, so that the children may learn to appreciate the work carried on there.

Talks

Schools may be fortunate enough to secure the services of someone who has served in the mission field or who is engaged in some interesting form of social service. Not all missionaries and social workers are capable of interesting children, and the teacher should be quite certain on this score before asking the permission of the Local Education Authority for them to enter the school.

A most interesting talk was given in one school by a member of the Women's Voluntary Service. Her inspiring story of work in bombed cities and evacuation areas, and among troops stationed in lonely places, made the children realize as never before the meaning of Christian service.

A school had for some time sent contributions to a certain mission, the children being interested and money coming in steadily. Then they received a visit from one of the workers in that particular mission. He was a man of outstanding personality, who not only interested and amused the children but cheerfully faced their rapid fire of questions. The result was that the missionary contributions increased threefold, and the children's interest in missionary work took on a new lease of life. Such contacts as the above are invaluable as a stimulus to children's interest in religious service.

There is one question children are always liable to ask on the subject of the Church, namely, " Why, if there is a universal Christian message, are there so many different Churches ? " They are always puzzled by the seeming paradox of one message and many methods. Without an answer to this ques-

tion children may leave school feeling that they have been duped, and that after all there can be no universal message. As children have been trained in corporate worship whilst at school, and as it is hoped that when they leave school they will continue this corporate worship by remaining or becoming members of some religious denomination, it is important for us to deal with the problem wisely—perhaps on the following lines. The study of the growth of the Church will have shown the children that at times there have been groups of people who broke away from the established Christian practices of their time. Sometimes the seceding body faded out. At others the new groups attracted a body of eager enthusiasts who did magnificent work, while the body from which they had seceded took steps to remedy the weaknesses of which it was accused.

Thus when Luther and his followers seceded from the Catholic Church they formed a new Church, which exerted tremendous influence on Christian thought and action, while its secession caused the parent Church to set its house in order. Again, Wesley not only founded a body of devout and sincere worshippers, but he also brought about an enrichment of the work of the Church of England.

To-day there is still one universal Gospel accepted by all the Christian Churches, the differences being minor ones, chiefly of organization and methods of corporate worship. This variety is often beneficial, for people can choose the method of worship which suits them, but still worship the same God and reverence the same central truths. When necessity arises the various denominations can and do unite in emphasizing their unity in the universal Gospel which they preach. Examples of this can be seen in the Religion and Life Week held throughout Britain, and in the days of National Prayer. Children should be led to see that the Bible is the revelation of God, and that Christian practice and belief are based partly on tradition but chiefly on its pages. So long as the children are prepared to mould their lives according to the ordinances of Biblical revelation, the main thing is achieved ; the methods by which they carry out the ordinance are of smaller moment.

The fourfold story of the Church thus ends at the present day, with the children fully realizing that the Universal Gospel is still potent in its appeal to men and women (including themselves) to show forth its truths in faith, worship, example, and service.

Recommended Books

A Book of Unlikely Saints. Margaret T. Monro. (Longmans)
Builders of the Church. Rowton. (National Society)
Christian Faith in the Modern World. E. O. Jones. (Mowbray)
Christian Social Reformers of the Nineteenth Century. Hugh Martin. (S.C.M.)
Christianity in England: An Historical Sketch. C. A. Alington. (Oxford University Press)
A First Church History. V. Walker. (S.C.M.)
From Alban to Bede. Sora. (Sunday School Union)
The Church in the Roman Empire. Gardner Smith. (Cambridge University Press)
A Short History of Our Religion. D. C. Somervell. (Bell)
The Story of Christendom. C. Duncan-Jones. (S.P.C.K.)

Chapter VIII

THE SYLLABUS

" What does it mean to be a Christian, and how can I become a practising Christian ? "

This is a question which the whole syllabus should be designed to answer, by imparting knowledge that will contribute to a true conception of Christian fellowship. The chief aim of Religious Instruction is the application of such knowledge to the conduct of the individual. Arithmetic, though " brightened up," can be wearisome to children if they do not realize that it will have practical value in after-school life. Similarly, although Bible stories may be made interesting and attractive at the time, they will fail completely in effect if they are not in some way ultimately connected in the mind of the child with the life that he must live in the world.

The Syllabus in Religious Knowledge should therefore be directed towards these ends : knowledge, inspiration, practice.

There cannot be any hard-and-fast division between these ends, but they must be remembered during the teaching of any one of the Agreed Syllabuses, or of a syllabus drawn up for a particular school or area.

When they reach the Senior School, children have already had six years' teaching, and this must be taken into account before the Senior School work is begun. It will usually be found that their knowledge consists of :

(*a*) Old Testament stories such as those of the Creation, the Flood, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, Moses, Joshua, Samuel, David, Deborah, Gideon, Samson ; and in some cases stories from the prophets such as Elisha, Amos, Isaiah, and Jeremiah. Little attempt will have been made to piece these stories together as a consecutive history or a progressive revelation.

(*b*) The more salient facts of our Lord's life, together with the

easier miracles and parables. Sometimes a brief outline will have been given of the story of St. Paul and of the early Church. (Certain Junior Schools will also have included stories of the saints, or of contemporary heroes like Grenfell of Labrador.)

The children will have learnt that these stories have a bearing on their own lives, and that " to be like Jesus " is the aim and ambition of every good man and woman. Moreover, they will have received some training in worship in their School Assembly, possibly some instruction in prayer, and that practical training in Christian ethics that is given by taking part in school activities for the general good.

Senior Schools therefore, using this knowledge and training as a basis on which to build, will strive to widen the children's knowledge, deepen the inspiration, enlarge the training in worship, and increase the opportunities for practical service.

So often when an Agreed Syllabus is being compiled the people most concerned, namely, the teachers and the children, are not sufficiently consulted. Teachers too often find an Agreed Syllabus to be concerned with theological argument, little notice having been taken of the fact that most children are of a non-academic type. Simplicity is of paramount importance, and the teaching material must never be obscured by reference to doctrinal terms as in the following extract from a 1935 syllabus for children of 11–12 years of age : " So the Living and Victorious Jesus is available for us ; in Him we find pardon for our sins, and grace to conquer our sins." A practising teacher would find some difficulty in making the above intelligible to children of twelve.

What of the children themselves ? Their reactions have not been sufficiently studied. Analysis of their questions and comments leads to the following conclusions :

(*a*) They do not hear enough about Christianity and modern times. Although most syllabuses include sections on this, these sections usually come at the end of the course, and are often omitted.

(*b*) They want to hear more about personages who are living to-day. Often they become unreceptive through having the Bible stories re-told, in almost the same fashion, at every stage of their school life. Stories of people to-day should be linked with the Bible narrative on every possible occasion, and they should not be left to a separate section.

(*c*) They are told little of how the Bible came to be written, or of the daily life of the people of Bible times. Much of this could be incidental, but it is often not given at all.

Many syllabuses that include sections on the Bible and how it was written, unfortunately assign them to the Fourth Year of the Course, which few children complete. Even though the raising of the school leaving age will bring the Fourth Year into general practice, it is regrettable that some simple explanation is not included at an earlier stage. Opinions will differ as to the best age and the best methods for doing this, but the majority will agree that no child should leave school without an intelligent grasp of how the Bible came into being and took its modern shape.

It would appear, then, that every Syllabus of Religious Instruction for Senior children should comprise the following matters at least. (There are no rigid lines of demarcation between the various sections, which are given here separately merely for convenience.)

OLD TESTAMENT

(1) *The chief events in the Old Testament narrative from the Creation to the story of the Maccabees.*—These will include :

The stories of the Creation, Cain and Abel, The Flood
The Patriarchs and God's promise to them
The Captivity in Egypt and the Exodus
The Struggle for the Promised Land
The Monarchy
The Exile in Babylon and the Return
The struggle with Greece and Rome and the influence of the Maccabees

Much of this will have been taught in the Junior School and will require only rapid revision, but this revision is necessary if the children are to grasp the continuity of the narrative. It should be completed in the first two years of the course, and with the A stream possibly in the first eighteen months. Unnecessary detail should be omitted. The Cambridgeshire Syllabus of Religious Teaching for Schools (1939) has excellent sections dealing with this period, viz. pages 56–60, 62–64, but only those sections marked with a black line should be included if the syllabus is not to be overloaded.

(2) *How the Old Testament was written and compiled.*—As mentioned previously, opinions differ as to the place this subject should occupy, but many children at a very early age raise questions such as, "How could Moses write an account of his own death ? " or, " Why have the books of the Bible such funny names ? " and it might be wise for the teacher to give a simple account to the First Year classes, leaving a more detailed study to be made, if expedient, at a later stage. The following points should receive attention :

> The relationship between the Hebrew Bible and our own
> The influence of folk story and legend
> The order in which the books were written
> That the English Bible is a translation

Care must be taken that the children are not wearied with too many facts ; but their interest can be aroused if the lessons arise from questions that they themselves have asked or in relation to particular problems that have been suggested to them. Interest will be aroused also if they feel that they are learning something that puzzles many adults.

(3) *The historical, geographical, and social background.*—History teachers are aware that the art of teaching their subject lies in judicious omission of unnecessary detail, and of facts that lie beyond or outside the comprehension of the children. Scripture teachers, too, when sketching in the historical, geographical, and social background of the Old Testament stories must ruthlessly practise the art of omission,

otherwise their syllabus will become overcrowded and lopsided, and will be in danger of degenerating into a scrappy collection of history and geography items. Much of the background should be filled in as the lessons progress, for the scene changes so rapidly that to attempt a series of formal background lessons would severely tax the children's memories and not relate the body of facts to the personages and incidents in hand.

Here are some examples of how this might be done:

The story of Abraham could link up with an account of the lives of nomadic tribes.

The descent into Egypt could link up with an account of and a discussion on Egyptian civilization.

The entry into Canaan could link up with the physical geography of Palestine.

Solomon's Temple could be linked with a description of the Jewish form of worship.

The story of the Maccabees could link up with an account of the Scribes and Pharisees.

By this means the salient geographical, historical, and social facts would be taught at the moment when they were most relevant. Moreover, with children who have already heard the stories in the Junior School, flagging interest will be sustained by the presentation of the new material. Such treatment, too, shows the stories to concern real people who lived lives and had interests that were like those of thousands of others of their day.

Where text-books are available the brighter children should be encouraged to discover the facts for themselves, and to draw maps and diagrams to illustrate their work.

(4) *Connection of the Old Testament stories with the modern world.*—On no account should the children be left to believe that the lessons are just so much dead history. No opportunity should therefore be lost to tell of any relevant modern persons and incidents that may help to illuminate the Old Testament themes. The moral lessons of the stories will then have a greater chance to sink home and produce effects on the character.

New Testament

(1) *The story of our Lord's life.*—Again the course consists chiefly of a review of previous lessons, but with careful preparation a good deal of new matter may be introduced. The parables will have been studied previously, but they should now reveal a deeper and a richer meaning.

Many teachers prefer to cover this part of the scheme by a study of St. Mark's Gospel, and there is much to recommend the choice ; for, as the *Handbook to the Cambridgeshire Syllabus of Religious Teaching* points out, St. Mark is particularly suitable for the purpose, as it deals with action rather than with dogma. But it omits the Infancy Narratives, and for those teachers who wish to include them part of St. Matthew and St. Luke will also be taken.

The salient points of our Lord's life will certainly be included, together with a selection of miracles and parables ; but as many of the parables and certain of the miracles are due for inclusion in the later part of the scheme, the selection must be carefully made. As for the "sayings of Jesus," not many would be included at this stage, on account of their difficulty.

(2) *How the New Testament took shape.*—The difficulty again arises as to the exact point of the syllabus at which this should be taught, but the wise course would appear to be to start the younger classes with the story of the writing of St. Mark's Gospel, as it is full of interest, and to leave the rest until a later stage. Perhaps the story of the Acts and of the Epistles, along with that of St. Luke, could well be taught when the study of the Acts is begun ; and in the last year a broad survey of the origin of the whole New Testament could be made.

Where children are encouraged to ask questions it may be that the order of teaching will sometimes have to be changed, because the best time to impart knowledge is at the moment when it is required. Questions of the following type are sometimes asked by First Year children of the A Group :

Why is it that St. Mark does not mention the birth of our Lord?

Why are all the "sayings of our Lord" in the other Gospels?

Why are there four Gospels? Were there any more?

The Old Testament books are not placed in the order in which they were written: are the New Testament books in their order of writing?

When these or similar questions are asked the time would appear ripe for one or more lessons on how the New Testament is constituted.

(3) *The historical, geographical, and social background.*—Usually the New Testament portion of the syllabus is taken before the Old Testament. As many of the historical, geographical, and social facts will be common to both, the teacher must decide when and where each topic is specially relevant. One school begins the year with a brief series of lessons on the geography of Palestine and the adjacent lands, giving the physical features, climatic regions, and positions of the chief towns. Each child draws an outline map and enters in the details mentioned, after which the map is used for reference throughout the course. Only four or five lessons are occupied in this way, any additional points being considered incidentally as the course proceeds. Whether these points should be taken orally or made the subject of written or research work will depend on the capacity of the children and on the books available.

(4) *The New Testament and the modern world.*—The New Testament is the story of the life, actions, and sayings of one who inspired others to "do likewise," wherefore stories of men and women, boys and girls, who have tried to live as He lived, are countless. Examples to take with the children are easily found. Children desiring to catch the spirit of our Lord's life in action may have their interest satisfied by these tales of Christian heroes and heroines, but there can be no true parallels to the acts of Jesus as God—His birth, His crucifixion, and His resurrection and ascension—and thus the contrast

between the limitations of the human and the illimitability of the divine may be clearly seen.

The Growth of the Church

Broadly speaking the whole syllabus falls into three parts : first, with the Old Testament, the growth of a faith, a faith in one God and the hope of a Messiah who shall be the culminating point of that faith ; second, with the Gospels, the realization of the hope, and the revelation in the person of Jesus Christ of the real meaning of that faith ; and third, with the Acts and Epistles, the growth of a Church to carry forth into the world the command of Jesus to " preach the Gospel " to every creature. If the teacher bears the three divisions in mind the children should gather from him that the record is not a series of separate incidents, but a continuous story, beginning with the promise to Adam that the seed of the woman should bruise the head of the serpent, continuing through the Patriarchs, Kings, and Prophets to Jesus and His apostles, and stretching through the ages until the children themselves take up their place in the narration. The story of the Bible, leading to the growth of the Christian Church, has a personal interest because each individual is a member of that Church. Conversely, the Church has a claim on each individual—a fact that should be stressed in this part of the scheme. The story of the rise of the Christian Church, then, is not formal history, but the story of the growth of an institution to which each of us to-day belongs, and in which each must bear responsibility.

In dealing with this portion of the syllabus, particularly with the brighter children, the teacher should stress the development of the Church as a corporate body of Christians. Naturally individual stories like those of Peter and Paul will need to be told, but they should be realised not as isolated matters, but as contributory to the growth and well-being of the Christian community.

The first stage to be studied will be that of the growth of the Church as recorded in the Acts of the Apostles, in which

Paul's missionary journeys form a conspicuous part. A warning is necessary, however, that these should not take up too much of the scheme, but be subordinated to the main idea—the continuous growth of the Church. Some of Paul's Epistles could well be studied along with his missionary journeys. A series of lessons on the Acts of the Apostles might be made under the following heads :

The Early Church :

The Ascension
Pentecost
Peter's speech and work of healing
The Early Christian Community

Persecution :

Stephen

The Idea of a Gentile Church :

Aeneas, Dorcas

The Spread of the Church :

The Story of Paul
The Missionary Journeys

The Organization of the Church :

Doctrine, Ceremony, Conduct
Growth of Holy Orders
Growth of Ceremonies

(An excellent scheme, based on the above suggestions, will be found in the *West Riding of Yorkshire Syllabus of Religious Instruction*, pages 89–95.)

Unfortunately many children leave school with Church history at this stage, and the complete link with their own lives and their surroundings is never satisfactorily forged. Provision for it is usually made in the Fourth Year of Agreed Syllabuses, a stage that is rarely reached ; but it ought to be made also for those children who leave school at the end of their third year, even if it means the omission of other parts of the syllabus.

The following matters are recommended for inclusion in the scheme :

Christianity in Rome:

Early persecutions
Christianity as the official religion
The Church leaders—Athanasius, Ambrose, Jerome, Gregory, etc.

Christianity in England:

Augustine and the Roman missionaries
Columba and the Celtic missionaries
Stories of Caedmon, Bede, Wilfrid, Hilda, etc.

The Middle Ages:

The Monasteries
The Friars

The Reformation:

The Rise of Protestantism
The English Bible
Stories of Wycliffe, Huss, Luther, Calvin, Knox, etc.

Modern Times:

The Evangelical Revival
The Oxford Movement
The Religion and Life Movement

Certain items in the above scheme will have been taught in the history periods, so that the children should be familiar with them. The teacher's aim in the Religious Instruction period is to recapitulate these facts so as to show the children how the Church has risen, and in spite of set-backs caused by the sinfulness of men has continued to grow and spread Christ's teaching.

Local association lends interest, and the teacher has an opportunity in this part of the scheme of linking the story of the Church with local places and possibly local saints. Few schools are far removed from some interesting monastery, abbey, or cathedral, and inquiry will often show a connection with some historical figure or saint, *e.g.* John of Beverley, Wilfrid of York, Augustine of Canterbury, etc.

THE CHURCH AND THE MODERN WORLD

Sufficient has previously been said to show the paramount importance of linking the Bible story whenever possible with the stories of modern saints and heroes, or incidents set in modern conditions. If this course has been consistently pursued by the teacher much of the ground in this section will have been covered already, and—what is more important—the idea will have been firmly implanted in the children's minds that the Bible stories have a meaning for the present day. When children reach their last year at school the teacher should go carefully over the entire ground they have covered and see how far this linkage with modern times has actually been secured. He should have access to the records of teachers taking the class in the previous years so that he may learn exactly which matters have been adequately treated, which require revision, and which still require attention. As before, when drawing up the scheme, he should be guided by the children's questions, but in any case he should make sure that the following matters receive treatment :

Modern Missionary Work :

Missionary societies
Location of missions
Famous missionaries

International Relations :

International Labour Office
Atlantic Charter

Social Activities :

Housing schemes
Education
Labour bureaux

Youth Movements :

Scouts, Guides, Y.M.C.A.

Voluntary Social Organizations :

N.S.P.C.A., N.S.P.C.C.
International Red Cross, etc.

Older children might consider and discuss the various occasions when the Churches speak with one voice, *e.g.* National Days of Prayer.

Inspiration

As previously stated, it is impossible to divorce the informative side of the syllabus from the inspirational part, for if the lessons where the chief aim is the imparting of knowledge are properly presented, and whenever possible a link is forged with modern times and the children's own lives, the teaching is bound to give inspiration. This, though indirect, may be the most effective kind of inspiration, for when children hear of the wonderful steadfastness of the Bible characters, and hear or read of how their example has inspired men and women of our own times to be similarly steadfast, they may well be themselves inspired to heroic conduct. Yet the children will have been largely dealing with actions for their own sake, without any conscious understanding of motives. Also they will scarcely have dealt with what the characters said or taught, particularly in respect of our Lord. Far from stressing motive and doctrine, the teacher's chief care during the first stage of the scheme must be to ensure that the chosen matter is simple and understandable by the children, and not overweighted with abstract ideas.

But at the next stage the children need definite instruction in the " rules " of the Christian faith and the way in which these may be carried out in practice. Much of this instruction will be based on the New Testament, and most of it on our Lord's own words, although the Old Testament will not be completely neglected. This is the stage of direct inspirational teaching.

There are so many alternative matters that might be included that each school will have to make its own choice, but the following have a strong claim for consideration :

The Christian Rules :

(*a*) *The Ten Commandments.*—These, as rules of conduct applicable to all people, ought to find a place in every syllabus.

(*b*) *A Simple Creed.*—An excellent summary is given in the Cambridgeshire syllabus.

Belief in :

God,
The Father
Jesus Christ, His Son, our Lord
The Holy Spirit
The Church
The Forgiveness of Sins
The Life Eternal

Also the Apostles' Creed may be used in Provided Council Schools, without violating the Cowper-Temple Clause.

(*c*) *The Lord's Prayer.*—This is the universal prayer of Christendom, and as such deserves far closer study than it usually receives.

Other topics of study might be selected from the following, although many schools will no doubt follow the particular syllabus adopted by their Local Education Authority :

How God desires to be worshipped
The Life of Faith in the Old Testament
Problems of Life and Conduct
The Message of Jesus
Prayers of Jesus (an excellent scheme for this is given in the West Riding syllabus)
The Message of the Prophets
The Sermon on the Mount
Prayer
Special Passages from Epistles and Revelation (see *A Syllabus of Religious Education*, City of York Education Committee)
Personal and Corporate Religion (see Cambridgeshire syllabus)

Practice

The practice of Christianity is, of course, the supreme test of our teaching, and certainly the most difficult to assess. To be always pointing a moral is to risk wearying the children, but as many opportunities as possible should be provided within the school for the practical application of Christian principles. Schools can be judged by their tone, which is a reflection of the animating spirit of the school. A healthy Christian tone can be detected at once. But good tone must not be confused with formal quietness, which may be due to repressive external discipline ; nor can it always be measured by bustle and activity, which may be due to bad organization. The right tone is obtained when teachers and scholars are, consciously or unconsciously, taking the standards of Christ as their guide to conduct. Teachers may often despair when they see their greatest efforts apparently falling on stony ground, but they have the consolation of knowing that no honest effort is ever a failure in the sight of God.

Tone cannot be built up by talk, but only by appropriate daily practices.

Training in worship in the School Assembly is one form of such practice. This training has been suggested in Chapter II, but it would be useful if, from time to time, explicit lessons or discussions had a place in the various classes. The matters to consider might be expressed as questions, for example :

> Why do we have school prayers ?
> Why do we close our eyes and put our hands together ?
> Why do we sing hymns ?
> What is the difference between public and private prayer?

Prayers and hymns used in the Assembly should be discussed with the children and suggestions concerning their choice should be invited. Children should be allowed to say quite frankly if they like or dislike certain prayers or hymns. Naturally the hymns and prayers actually used in Assembly will be explained to the children, for the repetition of a meaningless jumble of words is of little value.

Another form of daily Christian practice is the free giving of personal service to the community. The present war has brought one good thing into the schools, namely, greater opportunity for this service. Many schools are actively engaged in knitting comforts, raising money for the Red Cross, and performing a variety of "good turns." Every encouragement should be given to this form of Christian endeavour. By constantly using every opportunity of inculcating in the children the ideas of service, sportsmanship, and thought for others, the teacher will be lifting the tone of the school, and at the same time building the foundations of individual Christian lives.

The Complete Syllabus

To resume, the syllabus will cover in the three or four years of the Senior School course the following matters :

The Bible story from Genesis to the rise of the Early Church (including revision of Junior School work)
Some facts about the writing and compiling of the Bible
The historical, geographical, and social background of the Bible narrative
The history of the growth of the Church to the present day
Correlation between the Bible story and life to-day
The Christian faith as presented in the Bible
The practice of public worship
The practice of unselfish service for the common good

SUGGESTED SCHEMES

Three-year Course—A Stream

1st Year

Old Testament : Revision of stories learnt in the Junior School, and new work up to the Exile in Babylon
Short introduction to the geography of Palestine

New Testament : The Gospel of St. Mark. A brief outline of the writing of the Gospel

The Growth of the Church : Acts of the Apostles to the beginning of Paul's missionary journeys

2nd Year

Old Testament : Exile to the time of Christ

New Testament : One of the inspirational parts of the scheme, *e.g.* prayers of our Lord
How the New Testament was written

The Growth of the Church : Complete the Acts of the Apostles

3rd Year

Old Testament : How the Old Testament was written
An inspirational theme, *e.g.* The Ten Commandments, The Message of the Prophets

New Testament : An inspirational theme, *e.g.* The Sermon on the Mount, *or* Old Testament and New Testament combined to form a theme, *e.g.* Personal and Corporate Religion

The Growth of the Church : From the time of the end of the Acts up to the present day

All the above will include :

(*a*) relevant geographical, historical, and social facts

(*b*) stories of modern heroes and saints

(*c*) reference to modern Christian organisations, *e.g.* N.S.P.C.A., missionary societies, etc.

The amount of individual and group work should greatly increase in this year.

FOUR-YEAR COURSE

The first three years would be spent as in the Three-Year Course, and then a revision survey of the whole scheme could be given in the Fourth Year ; for if the Three-Year Course is suitably devised, the subject matter of it will be of vital im-

portance, and a revision of weak places will be all to the good. Moreover, by the time the Fourth Year is reached the pupils will have ideas of their own, and will be able to make useful suggestions. Commonly they will need revision of the sections dealing with the growth of the Church and the making of the Bible, and will ask for further facts concerning Christianity in the modern world.

Such revision might even occupy the whole year, for the work could indefinitely be extended by group study of related topics, like Hospitals, the Christian Sunday, etc. More and more the teacher should train the class to track down information for themselves, and to sift and criticise the information when obtained, as a preparation for after-school responsibilities. Information obtained by a group in this way may be profitably passed on to the rest of the class through debates or lecturettes.

One advantage of using a project method in the last year is that it gives the teacher opportunity for discussion with individual children, which is most valuable at this stage.

Three-year Course—B Stream

The actual content of the Course will be largely that of the A Stream, but the pace will be slower, and the inspirational themes of a simpler type.

1st Year

Old Testament: Revision of Junior School work. (This would at first glance appear a dull matter, but it must be remembered that some of the stories will not have been heard for a long time. There will be the added novelty of hearing the whole as a connected sequence, with modern illustrations.)

New Testament: St. Mark

The Growth of the Church: Acts of the Apostles to beginning of Paul's journeys

2nd Year

Old Testament: Story continued to the Exile in Babylon

New Testament :	A revision of our Lord's life undertaken from St. Matthew, St. Mark, St. Luke, and St. John. (A simple theme should run through the story, and ample time be given for discussion of the background.)
The Growth of the Church :	Paul's missionary journeys

3rd Year

Old Testament :	The Exile to the time of Christ. (It will be noted that the story of how the Old Testament came into being is not mentioned. Classes vary so much in composition, particularly in the Two Stream school, that it must rest with the individual teacher how much, if any, of this subject is to be included.)
New Testament :	A simple inspirational theme The story of how the New Testament came into being (if the teacher thinks the class capable of assimilating the matter)
The Growth of the Church :	Completion of the Acts of the Apostles The story continued to the present day, but in very simple form, and largely by means of biographies of saints and heroes

(Modern references will be everywhere included, for the B children, like those in the A Stream, need to realize that Christianity is a living religion.)

Where a fourth year is taken it should be spent largely in revision and amplification of the work done in the first three years, and carried out by means of simple inspirational themes. There is no reason why projects should not be undertaken, but they will include less writing and more drawing and modelling than in the A classes.

Three-year Course—C Stream

C Stream children present a special problem because many of them are scarcely capable of reading the Bible in the Authorized or Revised Version, which is usually provided for

them, and there are few suitable alternatives. For many teachers the scheme described below might prove suitable. No attempt has been made to divide it into years, because much depends on the teaching apparatus available, and on the intelligence of the class—the C Stream includes a wider range of intelligence, from the point of view of teachability, than the other Streams. Unless the school is very large and includes D classes, the C Stream will comprise some children who can read simple material quite well, and others who can barely read at all. The problem is further complicated by the fact that although these children are mentally retarded they are quick to detect and resent any attempt to treat them as Juniors.

The remedy would appear to be a series of biographies, each linked as far as possible with a modern counterpart, and helped out by numerous drawings, illustrations, and models to lend reality to the historical, geographical, and social background.

Old Testament: Abraham the Pioneer
Esau and Jacob the Quarrelsome
Joseph the Undaunted
Moses the Lawgiver
Joshua the Conqueror
Samuel the boy who Listened
Saul the Disobedient
David the Soldier
Solomon the Wise
The Great Prophets—Elijah, Elisha, Jeremiah, Ezekiel
Nehemiah the King's Cup-bearer
Ezra the Scribe
Daniel the Seer
Judas Maccabeus, the Lion of Judah

New Testament: Jesus the Hero of heroes

(The story taken from St. Mark and then followed with episodes from St. Luke, St. Matthew, and St. John. The number of the sayings of Jesus to be included will be dependent on the intelligence of the class.)

The Growth of the Church:

Ascension Story
Pentecost
Peter, the Coward who became a Hero
Stephen the Martyr
Paul the Dauntless

A selection of saints and heroes of the early Church, including those of the British Isles and if possible one or more of the district in which the school is situated.

Some of the following should be included:

Alban	Dominic
Alphage	Francis
Anthony the Hermit	Gregory
Augustine of Hippo	Ignatius
Benedict	Martin of Tours
Boniface	Perpetua
Cecilia	Polycarp

British Isles

Aidan	Hilda of Whitby
Anselm	Hugh of Lincoln
Augustine of Kent	John of Beverley
Bede	Margaret of Scotland
Columba	Mungo of Glasgow
Cuthbert	Paulinus
Dunstan	Wilfred of Sussex
Edmund	Wilfred of York
Ethelburga	Wycliffe

A brief history of the Church in modern times, treated in biographical fashion:

Wesley and his hymns	Wilberforce and slavery
Elizabeth Fry and prisons	Shaftesbury and factories

Medicine—Pasteur, Lister, Ross, the Curies
Missionaries—Grenfell, Carey, Mary Slessor, Patteson, Livingstone, Somervell

The biographies to be interlinked so that the children will feel the continuity of the history.

What, then, can the teacher expect from his pupils at the end of the course? Every child, whether he belongs to the A, B, or C Stream, should leave school with the following complement of religious knowledge and understanding :

The story of the rise and growth of the Christian Church from the earliest days to the present time, the amount of detail being dependent on the child's capabilities

The elements of the historical, geographical, and social background of the Bible

What constitutes the Bible, and how it came to assume its present form

A realization that the Bible stories can be an inspiration to him throughout life, and that Christianity is a living religion and not a dead history

Some understanding of the Christian religion, and a hearty desire to practise it in worship and the service of his fellow men, by his own efforts and the help of God

In cold print this is a seemingly impossible task, but unquestionably there are innumerable men and women who, through their school training, though they may never enter a place of worship, yet honestly try to lead a Christian life. Teachers can take heart that this is so.

Recommended Syllabuses

Syllabus of Religious Teaching for Schools. Cambridgeshire
A Syllabus of Religious Instruction. City of Nottingham
A Syllabus of Religious Instruction. City of York
A Syllabus of Religious Instruction. West Riding of Yorkshire

Chapter IX

THE ORAL LESSON

Less and less class teaching is attempted in Senior Schools, the children being encouraged instead to make discoveries for themselves. In place of being merely passive receptacles into which knowledge is poured, they become active searchers for knowledge. By this change of practice it is found that children not only work more satisfactorily, but retain the matter learnt for a longer time. This is just as true for Religious Instruction as for any other subject of the curriculum, and the day of constant oral lessons has gone. Unfortunately the teacher of Religious Instruction is handicapped by the fact that in most schools very few, if any, reference books are available, let alone other forms of teaching apparatus. Until this state of affairs is remedied, methods of teaching this subject will always be somewhat unsatisfactory. On the other hand, there is probably greater need for oral work in Religious Instruction than in other subjects, for the Bible stories require not only to be understood, but to have their application to the children's own lives discussed.

The amount of time devoted to oral work will vary with the grade of child, and also with the stage of the course, A Stream classes requiring less oral teaching than B and C, and a progressive diminution in oral lessons taking place from the First Year to the Fourth.

Oral lessons may be divided into two main types :

(*a*) those on a Story theme, *e.g.* The Nativity Stories

(*b*) those on an Abstract theme, *e.g.* The Sermon on the Mount

A—Method of Treatment for Story Theme

(1) *The Story.*—The teacher's first aim is that the class shall hear the story itself, and upon the excellence of this first presentation will largely depend the interest of the children for the rest of the lesson.

The following methods are suggested :

(*a*) The teacher telling the story to the class

Children like to hear a story if it is well told, and if the teacher is a gifted story-teller this method is valuable for occasional use, although it has disadvantages. The children play no active part, and there is a danger of losing their interest. Few teachers are natural tellers of stories, and before attempting story-telling with A Stream children they would do well to get the opinion of some candid friend as to their ability in this line.

(*b*) Reading aloud by the teacher

This method, too, has the weakness that the children are not doing the work. Good reading is easier than good story-telling, and the teacher might often with advantage read aloud a passage selected for study, incidentally affording the children an example of how appropriate reading can bring out many points that otherwise would be passed over. Children when reading the Authorized Version for themselves often miss much, particularly by wrong emphasis and by not realizing that there is a rhythmic flow to the words. The teacher's reading should bring out the full meaning and quality. Even A Stream children require training before they can read aloud an unprepared passage from the Authorized or Revised Version, but if they have copies of a suitable modern version they themselves might well do the reading aloud.

Some teachers make it a rule to conclude the lesson by reading aloud a passage that has been studied, whatever method has been earlier used ; and this practice has much to commend it.

When the B and C Stream classes are not provided with simplified modern versions, the telling of the story by the teacher and his reading aloud of the text are the only possible methods to adopt.

(*c*) Reading by the scholars

Where the books available are suited to the capacity of the children this will be the method most commonly used, although it must never be the only method. Previous mention

has been made of " reading round the class " wherein each pupil reads a verse or so of the passage, a method calculated to kill any story in the shortest possible time.

The children must first be given the opportunity of studying the passage for themselves. How few teachers would have the courage to read a lesson in church without previous preparation ! How unfair, therefore, to ask a boy or girl to undertake what is to him or her the equally great ordeal of reading an unprepared and difficult passage before a super-critical audience of school-fellows ! If the books available are suited to the capacity of the children this task of preparation should not take long. The children should be encouraged to ask questions about the pronunciation of the words, but explanations of meaning should be left until later. An excessive number of questions from the children would indicate that the book in use was too difficult.

When the children have studied the passage for a given length of time individuals should be asked to read it aloud to the rest of the class. They can best do this from the front, the rest of the class meanwhile listening. Not more than two children should be asked to read, otherwise time is wasted ; indeed, objection might be raised to a scholar's reading the passage aloud at all when the children have already read it silently for themselves ! Reading aloud by a scholar reveals to the teacher words that his pupils habitually mispronounce ; and although the lesson is not intended as a general training in reading, as there will be certain words met with during Religious Instruction which will not be met with in other lessons, a certain particular training in reading is justified. During the School Assembly children may be asked to read the lesson, and that affords a further opportunity for giving special training and for the children to gain confidence.

(*d*) Dramatic reading

In the earlier stages, and even in the later ones of B and C classes, simple dramatization increases interest in the story. Care must be taken that the dramatization is reverently carried out, otherwise its whole purpose is destroyed.

Three methods may be adopted, each of which has its value :

(i) Dialogue reading. Individual pupils read the words of the given personages whilst another acts as narrator. The story of the Crucifixion read in this fashion can be a most solemn experience.

(ii) An acted charade. Whilst the passage is being read the selected children perform the actions in dumb show. The story of the Marriage Feast makes an excellent subject for this treatment, which is specially suited to the younger classes and the B and C Streams.

(iii) Full dramatization of the story. This is best suited for the younger classes. The higher A classes may become too self-conscious and sophisticated for it to be satisfactory. Stories like that of Noah and the Ark, and certain of the Nativity stories, lend themselves well to this treatment.

The question arises over the stories dealing with Our Lord whether children are to be allowed to portray the person of Jesus. Much will depend on the teacher and the training the class has received. Usually when the dramatic method is first introduced the children look upon it as merely fun. After further training they become more efficient and make serious efforts to produce a good performance. When this stage has been reached a capable teacher might make the experiment of allowing a particularly able pupil to portray Jesus. If, however, he or she has any doubt as to the reactions of the children it is better not to make the attempt.

(2) *Meaning of the Story*.—At this stage the real aim of the lesson needs to be kept firmly in mind ; it is not sufficient for the children to know and understand the story, they must know it in such a way that it will add something to their religious experience, and will in some degree inspire them to become active Christians.

First the children must understand the story fully, and it will be found that class difficulties usually fall into one or other of four categories :

(*a*) Difficulties of language
(*b*) Historical difficulties
(*c*) Geographical difficulties
(*d*) Difficulties of social and religious customs, etc.

(*a*) The difficulties of language will chiefly arise when an A class is using the Revised or Authorized Version, particularly if the passage has not been previously studied as an English exercise. Far too much time is apt to be spent in removing language difficulties, and it would be better for the teacher to use a modern version, even if read aloud to the class, than to devote the major part of the lesson to explanations of language. Where difficult expressions do occur they are best dealt with early in the lesson.

(*b*) Quite intelligent adults are prone to doubt the authenticity of the Bible through ignorance of the facts of history. One such adult was heard to remark that he could not be expected to believe in the truth of the New Testament, for it spoke of King Herod when everyone knew that, as the Romans had conquered Palestine, the Emperor was the ruler. Such instances as this are by no means rare, and show that attention should be carefully drawn to the historical setting. At first the teacher will find that historical explanations take up a large part of the lesson, but the required time will tend to decrease as the main facts are covered. Children who have had a simple description of the Roman administration given to them when the Nativity stories were being studied will need only a brief recapitulation at other stages in the Gospel story.

Some teachers cope with the problem by giving a brief account of the historical background of the Old and New Testaments at the beginning of the course ; others prefer to make the teaching incidental to the story.

(*c*) Schools that possess good Bible atlases are indeed fortunate, but in every school it should be possible to have made in the art room large wall maps of Palestine and the neighbouring regions. These wall maps will be found invaluable in teaching the geographical background. (The general use of maps and illustrations will be dealt with later.) When geographical facts are given the Bible becomes much more interesting, and many obscure points take on a clear meaning.

Probably the best method of treating the geographical setting is to devote one or two early lessons to it, and to refer back to those lessons when geographical matters arise later.

(*d*) Various economic, social, and religious queries will arise, and are best dealt with as they occur. To attempt to give a full account at the beginning would take up too much time and prove heavy going to the children.

The above considerations may make it appear as though most of each lesson has to be devoted to explanations of difficulties, but in practice this will be found not to be the case. As the teacher will be familiar with the bearings of the whole course, he will find that a number of matters can safely be left to the later stages. Thus references to synagogues and to the Scribes and Pharisees occur very early in St. Mark's Gospel, and if the teacher attempts to enlarge on all these, one or possibly two lessons may be taken up in explanation. Instead, an account of synagogues could be given, probably with sketches, and it could be stated that the Scribes and Pharisees were Jewish leaders. Later in the Gospel, when further references occur, the facts about the synagogue would merely need revising, and full explanation could then be given of the Scribes and Pharisees.

(3) *The Use of the Story.*—The children are now in possession of an interesting story which they understand thoroughly, but which is as yet no different in essence from the stories they have heard in other lessons. To leave the matter there is to miss the whole importance of the lesson, which is to link up the story with the children's lives, a most difficult but necessary task.

The first step is for the teacher to describe the purpose or moral of the story, or else to ask the children what they feel the story has taught them. It might, for example, be the story of Jesus feeding the Five Thousand, which showed His care for people's needs ; or the story of Abraham about to offer Isaac as a sacrifice, which showed that when God was trying Abraham's faith He would not ask too much of him.

When the children have seen that there is a purpose behind

the story they can be led to see its application to modern times and conditions. Jesus still cares for people's bodily needs just as He did when He fed the Five Thousand. God still tests us as He tested Abraham. If the lesson can be consolidated by modern examples so much the better.

Finally the question must be asked by every boy and girl, " How does this affect me ? " so that the moral of the lesson becomes a personal challenge.

Teachers may object to what is apparently the Victorian method of pointing a moral, but the reply is that the Victorian idea was excellent, it was only in the carrying out that it failed. Children do not object to a moral so long as it is a challenge to do something instead of a mere injunction to be good. Not every lesson, of course, will provide a direct moral in relation to the children's personal lives, but throughout the course the children should be made aware that every lesson adds something to the knowledge that will help them to follow Christ and to work for Him.

With the careful treatment of each lesson or series of lessons in this fashion, it may be found that only a part of the syllabus can be completed ; but this in itself is not a very serious matter. A teacher should feel that the syllabus is of minor importance so long as the lessons are fulfilling their real purpose. By using modern examples wherever possible it may be found, indeed, that later portions of the syllabus have been already covered. In one school the Third Year syllabus included a study of Religion in Modern Times. When the third year was reached it was discovered that almost the whole of this had been covered incidentally in the previous two years and in a highly satisfactory manner, for the modern stories and examples had been given at the points where they directly linked up with the Bible story. As a consequence of this shortening of the Third Year syllabus, the gaps that had occurred in the First and Second Year schemes were easily made good. In any event a thorough teaching of a portion of the syllabus is far better than a hurried rush to complete the whole. The syllabus must fit the children, not the children the syllabus.

Demonstration Lesson

Oral " Story " Lesson

Subject :

The Healing of the Man sick of the Palsy
Form II A Age 12 years. Time : 35 min.

Apparatus required

Bible for each scholar. Map of Palestine
Picture or model of a Jewish house

Passage

St. Mark ii. 1–12

Preparation

Children find the passage in their Bibles and read it through silently.

Presentation

The passage tells us " he entered into Capernaum "—revise His previous activities—scholars point out position of the town—brief description of its importance—teacher pictures the crowd thronging round Him, some hoping to see further miracles, others to hear His teaching.

He enters into a house—picture of house—discussion of structure—flat roof—outside steps.

Story of how the man was let down on a mattress—teacher vividly pictures the surprise of those in the room. Since the crowd had previously witnessed some of the miracles of Jesus, they naturally looked forward to seeing a miraculous act. But Jesus surprised and shocked them by saying, " Son, thy sins be forgiven thee." Teacher questions children as to why the people were shocked, particularly " certain of the scribes "—how to claim to forgive sins was blasphemy and punishable by death—children questioned on the meaning of the word " scribe," and explanation given if required—probable reasons for scribes' presence.

Palsy—probably some form of nervous paralysis. Jesus proves by healing the sick man that He has power to forgive sins.

"Take up thy bed"—teacher may here give a reminder that the "bed" was a mattress.

At this stage brief questions may be invited from the class on any difficulties so far encountered. Some pupils are almost certain to ask what really happened.

It is suggested that the explanation of the miracle be in two parts :

(*a*) The man may have been suffering from nervous paralysis, and so have been incapable of moving, not for physical reasons but from a nervous disorder. Sometimes a sudden shock—as when the man, told that he was to be taken to a great "miracle worker," was let down from the roof, and heard the "miracle worker" saying, "Thy sins be forgiven. . . . Arise, and take up thy bed, and walk"—would be sufficient to produce a cure. Many instances of such cures have been known in modern times, but to the Jews of 2,000 years ago it would appear to be a miracle.

(*b*) We must, however, remember that Jesus was the Son of God, and that to God all things are possible. Although it is quite possible that the man was a nervous paralytic, it may be that Jesus thought it necessary to perform a miracle on a man whom no human being could have cured.

Application

Teacher points out to children that if the story is to be of any value it must be applied to their lives. Although there are many possible applications of the story the teacher will confine himself to one or two that are simple and concrete.

He might invite the class to make suggestions, or himself suggest that when we sin we bring on ourselves spiritual illness, and may also bring it on others. Some boys think that to use bad language is to appear to others grown up, but what they are certainly doing is to stunt and coarsen their own minds. A boy who constantly uses bad language is tending to deaden his mind to all the finer influences. Not only so, but example may affect younger children and exert an evil influence on them too.

There are many other possible applications of this lesson, but the above serves to show that the one chosen should be simple and practical, and should concern the children personally.

If time allows the children may be invited to ask further questions.

Finally, the teacher will read the passage aloud whilst the class listens.

B—Method of Treatment for Abstract Theme

Story lessons are themselves likely to contain an abstract element (as can be seen from the foregoing example) in the section dealing with the application to the lives of the scholars. But some useful Biblical passages are completely abstract—they are purely instructional or inspirational. Of such are the Sermon on the Mount and the Lord's Prayer. Before any such passages are included in the scheme the teacher must consider them very carefully, bearing in mind that abstractions are difficult to convey to children, and even when understood are of little value unless they can be translated into some sort of concrete advice. Many passages that are suitable for adults prove quite unsuitable for children, and no matter how noble such passages may be, they must be omitted if the teacher feels that he cannot achieve a translation into the concrete.

Even if the teacher succeeds in giving the class a concrete interpretation of such a passage, there is a danger of his being satisfied when they can repeat the interpretation in a parrot-like fashion. Analogous temptations occur in science lessons. A class of boys having been taught in oral lessons the theory of convection currents could glibly repeat that water near the source of heat expands, and as it rises cold water takes its place, and were able to draw neat diagrams showing the convection currents flowing in a beaker of hot water. By carefully questioning, however, it was discovered, first, that the children had no real liking for the lesson, and therefore it was improbable that they would remember it for any length of time, and second, that they had no realization of what had

taken place or how to apply it to everyday life. Terms such as "expansion," "source of heat," "convection current" were just meaningless. Similarly with the Sermon on the Mount. The children, whilst remembering the interpretation in so many words, might not have the capacity for realizing its message or applying it to their own lives. Methods must therefore be discovered which will encourage the scholar to ponder over the subject of the lesson, and lead him to see the abstract moralizing in terms of concrete situations.

Adults sometimes forget that children have a very limited experience of life, particularly in spiritual matters. Terms such as "faith in God," "forgiveness of sins," "the Son of God" are often meaningless to them; indeed, many adults hear such terms without realizing their import.

The danger of retailing a series of clichés must be avoided, and care taken to ensure that every word we employ is within the experience of the scholars. Theologians maintain that faith must play a large part in the life of a Christian, but faith must be based on experience, and can widen only as experience widens, whether it be practical experience of life or further study of the Bible. By careful choice of subjects the teacher can ensure that knowledge and faith progress together in the educational process. If scholars have the meaning of "forgiveness of sins" explained to them, they should be told that if they have faith in the reality of forgiveness they will in time experience it directly.

Occasionally a child will ask a question the full answer to which would lie beyond his grasp. For example, an eleven-year-old scholar has been known to ask what is meant by the Trinity. The technique suggested is that an explanation compatible with the scholar's age be given, and that he be then recommended to ask for further information at a later stage. (Often it is useful if the teacher talks to the child privately, for he can thus resolve many doubts and difficulties impossible to deal with at length in a big class.) Answering the eleven-year-old who asked the question on the Trinity, the teacher said that there were three persons in the Trinity, God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost; and that

they were of equal importance, but all had different work to do. The boy was given Biblical references to all three, and he eagerly looked them up. He appeared satisfied with the explanation, and was encouraged to ask further questions, which in fact were along the line of textual references. Probably in his case curiosity was satisfied for the moment, but the stimulus provided will encourage him not only to continue his enquiries in the text, but also to ask further questions later on. Sometimes children ask questions that the teacher finds difficult to answer without preparation. He should ask the scholar to repeat his question in a few days' time, and should meanwhile consult works of reference if the question is of a textual character, or some more competent person if the standard books do not deal with the point, or if the problem raised is of a controversial nature.

To sum up: in framing lessons of the abstract type the following considerations apply:

That wherever possible the abstract must be interpreted in terms of the concrete.

That any explanations given must be well within the children's comprehension.

That a balance must be kept between matters requiring faith and the children's own experience.

That every encouragement must be given to the children to ask questions.

Two methods of treatment for abstract lessons are suggested below, one for younger and the other for older children, but they are not intended to supersede the teacher's own methods if they work well with his particular class.

Younger Children

As children love a story, the biographical method is particularly suitable for this type of lesson. The passage to be explained should be quite short, probably only one verse, and this will be illustrated by a short biography or story, so that the children may see the practical application. If the story is of modern times so much the better.

Biography may precede verse reading, or *vice versa*, as the teacher prefers, the thing to avoid being that the lesson should turn into a sermon. At the end of the lesson, if the teacher has told the story really well, there will be no need to make any comment, as the children will see the point for themselves.

Demonstration Lesson

Type : Oral-abstract

Subject : The Lord's Prayer—" Hallowed be Thy name "

Teacher questions the children. " To whom is the prayer addressed ? " " What should we expect to give to our earthly father?" He elicits that amongst other things we should expect to give respect, love, obedience.

When we say " Hallowed be Thy Name " we are expressing our respect to God, and our reverence for Him.

How can we directly show reverence to God ?

The class will probably give as examples the taking off of caps when they enter a place of worship, or kneeling to say prayers, but the teacher will point out that to " hallow " God's name requires far more than this—it demands constant service.

At this point the teacher should recount one or two anecdotes in illustration.

(Those given below are from Miss Higham's book, *Torches for Teachers* (National Society), which contains a large number of excellent stories.)

A visitor to the Hall of Congress, it is said, asked how he could distinguish Mr. Washington of Virginia. The reply was, " You will know him easily when Congress is at prayer. Mr. Washington is the gentleman who kneels down."

> All may of Thee partake.
> Nothing can be so mean
> Which with this tincture—" for Thy sake "—
> Will not grow bright and clean.
> A servant with this clause
> Makes drudgery divine.
> Who sweeps a room as for Thy laws,
> Makes that, and th' action fine.
>
> George Herbert

No further elaboration is required; perhaps just the remark of the teacher, "So you see we can hallow God's name in everything we do," followed by a reverent repetition of the Lord's Prayer.

Older Children

Under ideal conditions—that is, with a plentiful supply of books—the children would be given various references which they could look up for themselves, or would be told to read a number of biographies. Where, however, the available books do not allow of these procedures, class discussion could take their place. It is the children's ideas that the teacher wants; it is on them that he can build, for they give him a sure guide to the children's needs. Thirteen-year-olds, particularly boys, are often stated to be shy of expressing themselves. This is only a half-truth, for whilst naturally hesitant about personal matters when speaking to a group, they are capable enough of expressing definite opinions on matters of general interest. A teacher who finds pupils of this age reluctant to speak should examine the previous history of the class. It will almost always be found that the children have been repressed, and not encouraged to speak or to ask questions. Before any satisfactory work can be attempted the teacher must set to work creating an atmosphere of confidence.

Having done so the teacher may then suggest that on a certain date the class will discuss a particular sentence in the Bible, and that meanwhile they might be thinking over its meaning. On the appointed day the children will duly be asked what they think the sentence means, and in this way a general discussion will be started. Questions will be asked and answered, either by class or by teacher; ideas will be expressed which will give the teacher material for future lessons; and at the end of the period the teacher will sum up, give his own interpretation, probably tell a relevant story, and suggest further reading. Discussions of this type may seem unprofitable, and indeed they will be so in the hands of some teachers, but carefully prepared and above all carefully followed up they are invaluable.

One cannot lay down a fixed plan for such a lesson, but the following notes may prove suggestive.

Subject : Blessed are the meek : for they shall inherit the earth

The children are given the passage several days in advance, and it is suggested that they try to discover for themselves where the words first occur, by whom they were spoken, and what is the meaning of such words as *meek* and *inherit.* Quite a number of children will, if encouraged, ask for further information before the lesson takes place.

The teacher begins the lesson by asking if anyone has discovered the location of the passage. Next he asks for the occasion of it, and then the meaning of the new words in it. Various children will be invited to answer. As to the third question, they will be confused by the word *meek*, and will certainly fail to see how anyone could inherit the earth, in the sense that an eldest son inherits his father's estate. A good deal of assistance will be required from the teacher before the real meanings are forthcoming.

There is a danger with passages such as this that the teacher may try to thrust his opinion on the children without first preparing the ground. Merely to express the view that the best Christians are the meek people, and then to elaborate the meaning of "meek" is insufficient. Boys particularly are not enamoured of "meekness" in the obvious sense of that word, and they must be encouraged to express their doubts and difficulties. Further explanations may then be given, and a short biography recounted.

This should not be the end of the lesson, for any outstanding difficulties must be cleared up.

(*a*) Several children may still be unconvinced that meekness is the best policy, and some method of convincing them must be found. One way would be to get them to read the biographies of a few "red-blooded" heroes like Alexander the Great, Julius Cæsar, and Napoleon, and then to compare the lastingness of their life-work with that of "meek" heroes like St. Francis, Damien, and Kagawa.

(*b*) "Meek" to many children is synonymous with "cowardly." This false conception can best be dispelled by reference to the stories of great Christian heroes.

(*c*) A few children may be sufficiently interested to undertake a search for examples of Our Lord's meekness, and they should be set to do so.

(*d*) Questions may be too numerous to deal with in the lesson, and could then be written down and put into a question box. They would thus provide material for later discussions.

Children do think about religious questions, but they rarely have the opportunity of a free and friendly discussion of them. Often their parents dislike discussion, and many children are afraid to approach a priest or minister. A discussion as outlined above, if conducted in a suitable atmosphere, will give them the opportunity to ask for a solution to some of their difficulties, and by creating a link of sympathy between teacher and taught, will often lead them to unburden themselves of personal problems, which may have been causing them serious worry.

Recommended Reading

God's Adventurers. M. H. Tiltman. (Harrap)
Pioneers of the Kingdom. P. L. Garlick. (Highway Press)
Torches for Teachers. Maud L. Higham. (National Society)
Yarns of Ceylon. W. J. Noble. (Edinburgh House Press)
Yarns on Heroes of the Day's Work. B. Mathews. (Edinburgh House Press)
Yarns on Men of Africa. A. M. Chirgwin. (Edinburgh House Press)
Yarns on the Book. A. M. Chirgwin. (Edinburgh House Press)
Yarns of the Orient. W. P. Nairne. (Edinburgh House Press)

CHAPTER X

WRITTEN WORK AND PRIVATE STUDY

RELIGIOUS INSTRUCTION generally suffers the grave disadvantage of coming at the beginning or end of the school session, a time particularly liable to interruptions for the marking of registers, collection of Savings Bank contributions, etc. Furthermore, it is customary in many districts for the lesson to be limited to thirty minutes, apart from reduction by the foregoing interruptions. Consequently if written work is attempted the time available for it is very short, and some teachers take the path of least resistance and cut it out. One authority, the County Council of the West Riding of Yorkshire, now allows its scholars to take Religious Instruction from 9 to 9.55 a.m. on three mornings a week, so that the problem of shortage of time for written work does not arise. Even where the time is very short some attempt should be made to introduce written work, for it is by this means that the scholars may be trained to search the scriptures for themselves. The experienced teacher will have ways of his own to make the work interesting, but the following suggestions may prove helpful to others.

MAPS

Every pupil should have his own copy of the three maps mentioned in an earlier chapter, viz. :

Palestine
The Mediterranean
The Eastern Mediterranean, including Arabia and Asia Minor

By cyclostyling, numerous copies may be made available, and valuable time will be saved, each child being provided with several copies of the same blank map to use for a variety of purposes.

On these maps may be entered the names of places met with in the children's reading, whether mountains, rivers, lakes, or towns. The entries should not be made all at once from an atlas, but little by little as names occur in the course of the lessons. As cyclostyle paper is not suitable for water-colour washes, the physical features should be marked by coloured crayons. If the maps are carefully kept, in the course of their three or four years in the Senior School the children will have built up their own biblical atlas, which they will appreciate the more because it has been their own work, and which will be more valuable than a printed atlas, as it will contain no irrelevant entries. The location of biblical places will become familiar. Thus the child who has marked the Plain of the Philistines on his map will easily grasp the point of any references to the Philistines, and the child well acquainted with the physical map of Palestine will at once realize the situation of the traveller who " went down from Jerusalem to Jordan and fell among thieves."

Senior children, once they have overcome the difficulties of printing the names, enjoy drawing maps, so much so that they will often ask permission to complete them at home—furnishing a link between home and school in the most character-forming subject of the curriculum. It is not unknown for parents to become as eager as their children in searching out places mentioned in scripture ; and the Bible has been brought back into use in homes where it had been long neglected.

Drawings

Small children enjoy drawing, and although their sketches may be quite unintelligible to an adult, the children themselves see the meaning in them. Unfortunately this spontaneous mode of self-expression decays at about the age of ten. Reasons for the decay are many, but one is that adult criticism of children's drawing enforces a technique beyond the child's stage of development ; the teacher points out that the table with which the child was hitherto quite satisfied is wrongly drawn, and goes on to give exercises in perspective which

further confuse the child and result in a stiffness that is unsatisfactory to both teacher and taught. Fortunately there has been a revolution in the teaching of Art during recent years, with a consequent increase in interest on the part of the child and greater spontaneity in his drawings. Teachers of Religious Instruction should acquaint themselves with this new art technique, for it can be usefully employed in their lessons. Children should be encouraged to make quick pencil sketches of houses, settings, etc., with which to illustrate their notes. The shortness of the period available for instruction makes the use of paint impracticable, but co-operation between the respective teachers should make it possible for some of the Bible illustrations to be done during Art lessons. By the new mode of teaching Senior pupils are producing excellent art work, and it might be possible for the abler pupils to execute large-scale drawings, of biblical interest, for decorating classrooms.

In one school the boys were asked to produce a series of posters announcing the capture of Jerusalem. Not only were the children strongly interested in drawing them, but the quality of the posters was high. The project may seem unorthodox, but it proved serviceable. Teachers generally are afraid of the unorthodox, and so are apt to miss the advantage of any methods that lie off the beaten path.

The appreciation of noble buildings has a religious value. Visits should be paid to local churches or cathedrals and sketches made of interesting architectural features, the teacher always making clear, however, that the real object of the visit is not architectural, but to learn how the worship of God finds expression in man's handiwork. Correlation between subjects saves time, and visits made during Art periods can be of service to Religious Instruction.

The following are some examples of the application of Art to Religious Instruction, using individual inquiry and observation.

Form I A

The class, working in groups, having collected illustrations

of Eastern habitations, were asked to discover and draw the kind of house where would live

(*a*) a village carpenter
(*b*) a shepherd

Much of the work was done in spare time, and the Art teacher was freely consulted.

Form I C

The children were given a book containing a small pictorial chart of Jerusalem, and were asked to draw a plan 6 in. by 6 in., marking and lettering all the places that had been mentioned in their lessons, *e.g.* the Temple, the Garden of Gethsemane, Calvary, Via Dolorosa.

Form III C

A group of boys good at art were given the task of making illustrations of the village of Nazareth. The problem was discussed with them, and they suggested the following scheme :

A map showing the position of Nazareth
A Jewish home
The village well
A carpenter's shop
The village street
The interior of a house
Cooking pots
The village synagogue

Reference books being available, the boys set to work directly. They used spare moments in Art lessons to eke out the time, and did some work voluntarily at home.

Form III A

A similar but more advanced scheme was tried with this Form, the subject being Palestine, the Land and its People. Illustrations were drawn largely in Art lessons, as the scheme was wide enough to afford general Art practice. The following items were included, and were finally mounted on large sheets of cardboard, so as to be on tap for class-room use.

Large map of Palestine showing Physical and Political Divisions (Art subject—Lettering)

Sheet 1 House (Art subject—Perspective and Illustration)
Sheet 2 Dress (Art subject—Figure Drawing)
Sheet 3 Birds and Beasts (Art subject—Figure Drawing)
Sheet 4 Decorations of Dress, Utensils, etc. (Art subject —Design)
Sheet 5 Map of Jerusalem (Art subject—Lettering)
Sheet 6 Worship—Synagogue and Temple (Art subject—Perspective and Illustration)
Sheet 7 Biblical References (Art subject—Lettering)

When children reach the top class in a Senior School they should be encouraged as far as possible in Art lessons to undertake the type of work for which they are most suited, and the above project includes almost every subject in an Art scheme. Some children who are not good at art and tend to feel discouraged during Art lessons, show much interest in the drawing and colouring of maps, and find such work well within their powers.

The amount of guidance given by the teacher when the foregoing scheme is undertaken will depend largely on the ability of the children, and the number of books, illustrations, etc., available in the school or at the local public library. B and C stream children require regular direction, but older A stream children who have received training in this type of work, should be able to undertake most of the research for themselves, and even if their results are not quite so satisfactory as when total supervision is given, they will at least have had practice in the exercise of initiative, a by no means negligible compensation.

In the process of organizing a Boys' Club which included a group of boys aged 11–14 years, the teacher made a rough analysis of those who attended the Drawing Section, and noted certain points concerning them :

(1) Boys attending could be roughly divided into the following groups :

Group 1 A large group of younger boys, aged 11–12 years, who did not want "school drawing" but just "wanted to draw what they liked"

Group 2 A very small group of younger boys, aged 11–12 years, with executive skill above the average, whose desire was for further instruction

Group 3 A small group of older boys, 13–14 years, whose abilities and desires coincided with those of Group 2

There were no older boys comparable to Group 1, probably because the weak ones, having realized their lack of capacity for Art, had lost interest in the subject.

(2) Group 1 liked painting lurid scenes, in which air, sea, and land battles predominated. The paintings were badly done, without perspective, and there was an absence of any kind of pattern or design, but they were original, lively, and colourful. Any suggestions for the improvement of technique had to be tactfully made, and a helper who insisted on giving formal lessons in perspective reduced the class by fifty per cent. in a week.

(3) Group 2 were very cautious, as they felt themselves to be the *élite* of the younger group, and concentrated their efforts on simple aeroplanes (with an occasional burst of fire), simple posters, and in a few instances simple figures. They were eager for advice.

(4) Group 3 had ambitions, and in most cases demanded advice, as their desires outran their executive ability. Lively illustrations of the Group 1 type were not produced, but there appeared to be echoes of them in the dashing conceptions of their poster work. Caricature sketches were also a favourite pastime of this group.

Teachers desirous of encouraging children's out-of-school efforts may find hints for procedure in the above analysis. The best approach with the younger children might be to encourage them to make drawings illustrating Bible actions, *e.g.* Daniel in the lion's den. In the completed drawings difficulty will be found in distinguishing between Daniel and the lions, except that the lions will have a most ugly leer and Daniel will probably be clasping very large hands in prayer. But the children will delight in the work, and home efforts of this type will assist the forging of a home-school link.

Generalization from so limited a field of particulars is dangerous, and it is probable that many schools can so train their children that creative ability will remain effective throughout their school life, in which case the children will retain their desire to do original illustrative work. In schools where this is not the case, Groups 2 and 3 might be encouraged to try the more formal drawing of houses, etc.

There appears to be an exception (already noted) to the younger children's dislike of any mechanical form of drawing, namely, in respect of copying and colouring maps. There is room here for the teacher to experiment.

Craft work has developed rapidly in many schools, and some of the book-binding now produced is very creditable both to the young craftsmen and to the teacher. Pupils delight in adorning their books, and if scripture notebooks were well bound and decorated they might become treasured possessions. During the war years the idea of another special exercise book may cause concern, but a useful plan was devised in a certain school to overcome the difficulty. The boys had small notebooks for their written work, and these were carefully and tastefully rebound in Craft lessons. In addition a stoutly bound notebook, which was already full, was given to each boy, and that also was rebound. Into this were pasted all maps and drawings that had been done on odd scraps of paper, the surrounding surface being blacked out with Indian ink or coloured with poster paint, and the book became the receptable also of work done at home—whether drawings made or illustrated cuttings collected. Odd moments frequently occur when the teacher is called from the room and the class is left with nothing to do, except to get into mischief. It was interesting to see that in this school the boys filled such leisure moments by working at their scripture scrap-book.

Research Work

To render every child familiar with the Bible should be the main aim of the scripture teacher. It should be his hope to make the familiarity as wide as possible. When a story

from one Gospel has been read the children might well be given the location of it in other Gospels, and asked to find and read the passages for themselves.

Mention has already been made of familiarizing the children with the geographical, historical, and social background of the Bible. When a particular aspect has been treated the children should be asked to look up and read appropriate references. The following are examples :

The children were dealing with the Waters of Meram, and mention was made of the surrounding hills where lived the shepherds and their flocks. Reference was made to Psalm 23, and the statement, "He maketh me to lie down in green pastures," the teacher pointing out that very often the green pastures lay beside such patches of water as Meram. Discussion then arose on the many references in the Bible to sheep and shepherds. The children readily gave instances from their own knowledge—"I am the good Shepherd," the parable of the Lost Sheep, etc. Under the guidance of the teacher these passages were found and discussed, and a further list of references was written on the blackboard for private study.

When the wine presses of Palestine came up for consideration a younger pupil asked how wine was extracted. Hearing how the grapes were trodden, he put forward the suggestion that the long garments of the treaders must have become very dirty. An explanation of how they "girded up their loins" was then given, and further references were traced.

Even B and C stream children enjoy this kind of detective work occasionally, and it has been known for them to startle their parents by asking how many references they knew to a certain word contained in the Bible.

The older A stream pupils may be asked to find the references for themselves by making use of a concordance.

Teachers may object to the use of such methods on the grounds that they lead to vague and undirected learning, and though a certain familiarity with the Bible is gained, the work is not inspirational but textual. If much time is spent on such work the first of these objections certainly stands. When a

particular word, such as "sheep," is being discussed, one or two references only should be found during the lesson, and the rest should be relegated to the pupil's own time. It is possible to get children so interested that they will spend a considerable amount of their free time in doing this work. Inspirational purpose must lie behind all scripture teaching practices, but it cannot become effective unless the children are familiar with the Bible, and not only familiar with but really interested in it. No-one would claim that the average child in our schools to-day is keenly interested in the Bible, so that he will turn to it in his leisure moments ; but if he were encouraged to give up a little time just to search for a word now and then, there would be a chance that the interest so created might grow. Inspiration would then follow.

Teachers will be able to devise for themselves other types of detective work. Those mentioned above have been tested in practice. The following have not been tried out, but may be found suggestive :

(1) Set the pupils to work through their school hymn book finding suitable hymns for use in the School Assembly, and later ask them to look also through other hymn books. Books that might prove useful in this connection are :

Songs of Praise Discussed. Dearmer
Songs of Praise
English Hymnal. (All by Oxford University Press)

(2) Reference has been made to the linking of Bible narratives with modern stories. With older children the teacher, instead of providing the modern parallel, might delegate to the class the task of finding one for themselves.

Thus when the Healing Miracles are being studied individual children might be set to read and tell the class the stories of Damien, Lister, Schweitzer, Kagawa, Grenfell, Somervell, Pasteur, the Curies, etc. (The biographies should if possible be made available in the school, but in any large town the public library would help.)

(3) Just as pupils were asked to search for hymns, they might be asked to make lists of prayers for various occasions.

Little research has been carried out on the kinds of prayers that really appeal to children, and it may be that many of the prayers at present being used are too difficult. It would be interesting to see a list of prayers drawn up by the pupils themselves, particularly so if the latter were able to give the reasons for their likes and dislikes. (Books that might be issued to them are listed at the end of Chapter II.)

The foregoing are kinds of detective work that may be undertaken by individual children; yet the results may have a collective value. There is, however, the Project Method, by means of which the work of each pupil or group of pupils forms part of a whole scheme. Excellent suggestions for such projects are to be found in *The Teaching of Religion*, by Canon E. F. Braley (Longman), pages 145–49. I am grateful for Canon Braley's permission to quote the following example.

The Local Hospital

The class are invited to consider the subject of the Local Hospital. They will be asked to say all they know about it. They will probably refer to its position, its personnel, the scope of its activities. After this the teacher might ask how it is supported. Follow this up by saying why people support hospitals—sympathy for suffering. The children would then be asked to find out the attitude of ancient nations to the weak and helpless, *e.g.* Greeks and Romans. As a result of Christ's teaching and example, people's attitude changed. Consider Christ's teaching on the subject: the parable of the Good Samaritan (St. Luke x. 30–36). His own personal healing miracles (St. Matthew ix. 36). Healing of the paralytic (St. Mark ii. 1–12). Casting out of devils (St. Mark i. 23–25; ix. 17–27). The impotent man at Bethsaida (St. John v. 1–16). Restoring speech and sight (St. Matthew ix. 33). Sometimes He performs miracles of healing in answer to prayer—Syrophœnician woman (St. Mark vii. 26). Blind Bartimæus (St. Luke xviii. 35–43). Healing of the Ten Lepers (St. Luke xvii. 11–19). Other miracles of healing in the New Testament by Christ's followers—the lame man at the gate "Beautiful" of the Temple (Acts iii. 1–11; ix. 10–19).

Children would be led to see that hospitals are distinctively Christian in their origin. The early examples of hospitals in Christian history would be looked up—the work of the monasteries—the work of Florence Nightingale. Healing work in the Mission Field to-day. . . .

Canon Braley also outlines an excellent project on "Sunday."

Projects of this type entail much preparation on the part of the teacher, not least in the working out of schemes, and if Canon Braley could be induced to publish more of these projects he would be doing the teaching profession a great service.

Memory Work

Children learn rapidly at this age, and there is the danger that they may be set to learn passages that are too lengthy. A class should not be set to copy verses in their notebooks and to learn them, except after specific explanation by the teacher. Temptation to set unexplained work like this is very great when the many extraneous duties already mentioned will not allow the teacher to give his full attention to the class. There are so many interesting things with which the class could be occupied that it is a pity to kill interest by setting useless repetition.

When a suitable passage has been chosen the teacher should go through it very carefully and see what explanation is desirable and where illustrative stories can be told. As each phrase of the passage is dealt with the class should enter it in their notebooks. By this method it will be found that the class have learnt the passage by the time the last entry has been made, and not only learnt but understood it. If their interest has been aroused they will refer to their own copy from time to time in order to refresh their memories.

Another method is to enter in the notebooks not only the given passage but references to the stories told about it, as in the following example.

The prayer commonly although probably erroneously attributed to Ignatius Loyola was entered in the pupil's notebooks in the following fashion :

1. Grant us, good Lord, to serve Thee as Thou deservest ; 2. to give and not to count the cost ; 3. to toil and not to seek for rest ; 4. to fight and not to heed the wounds ; 5. to labour and not to ask for any reward save that of knowing that we do Thy will.

1. Some people say this prayer was written by Ignatius Loyola. In any case a prayer that suits his character. Formed the Society of Jesus, religious body which gave up everything for Christ—home, money, friends.
2. Sunda Singh—great Indian teacher—made dangerous journeys into Tibet—had to leave his parents and friends when he became a Christian.
3. Alan Somervell—Mt. Everest explorer—now working long hours in an Indian mission hospital.
4. Father Damien—lived amongst the lepers until himself a leper.
5. Dr. Schweitzer—a great musician, a great Bible scholar, and a great doctor. Content to work in a mission hospital in French Equatorial Africa.

When these notes had been entered the children knew the prayer, and revision later fixed in their minds the modern examples they had been given.

There is one exception to the rule that children should not enter unexplained passages in their notebooks—namely, when the passages are of their own choice. In doing so they should have complete freedom.

Passages entered should include verses from the Bible, prayers, hymns, and also prose and verse passages from other sources.

Précis Work

Monotony and dullness should be avoided in the lessons, but it will be necessary for the lower classes, especially of the A Stream, to draw up a short précis of the ground covered so that in the later stages they may grasp the continuity of the scheme. Through often hearing them, they usually remember the details of the Bible stories, and they will need to make only the shortest of notes. In oral lessons the teacher will at first make a brief blackboard summary, and the children will copy this into their notebooks. Quite soon this help will be unnecessary, and the pupils will make their notes unaided. The following shows an average type of note-making :

The Story of the Good Samaritan

Jerusalem to Jericho—thieves.
Priest—did not help.
Levite—did not help.
Samaritan—helped. (Jews had no dealings with Samaritans.)
Who is my neighbour ?

The making of a précis such as this should occupy only three or four minutes of the lesson, but would remind the children of the salient points. The A Stream at a later stage will be occupied with research work, when the notes will be of a different kind.

B Stream children will copy the blackboard summary until such time as they are able to make short notes of their own. C Stream children might well dispense with note-making, and rely instead on simple sketches.

Answers to Questions

Though there may sometimes be a place for the more formal answer of essay type, the usual exercise in scripture study should take a problem form. As the stories the children learn are of incidents that occurred in times long past and yet that have an application to-day, it is suggested that the exercises be given a modern slant. The following examples show what is meant by this.

(*a*) When dealing with the attitude of the Scribes and Pharisees to the teaching of Jesus, tell the children to imagine themselves Pharisees, and to write a letter to the editor of the *Jerusalem News* complaining of the attitude of the peasant teacher from Nazareth.

(*b*) The re-writing of a passage from the Prophets as a B.B.C. talk.

(*c*) Let the children imagine they are a special correspondent present at some of the Bible incidents, and are reporting to their paper. With older boys who have received training

in this way, interesting results are likely. When the story is suitable they might also be asked to report on special interviews granted by participants in the action; as follows:

The Trial of Jesus

Special interview with:

The High Priest
The woman who spoke to Peter
Peter himself
The guard who stood by Jesus
The man who stood in the crowd

If the pupils can invent their own headlines so much the better.

Many Biblical stories are suitable for this treatment, and the pupils certainly enjoy writing from this angle. At first the teacher may be disturbed by the over-coloured and journalistic English which his pupils will use, but the loss in biblical dignity will be more than compensated by the gain in actuality. More important, the children begin to realize that the biblical personages were real people, living real lives, and that many of the incidents were quite as dramatic as anything that happens to-day.

From time to time the children should be asked to re-write a scripture passage in modern English. The younger classes will find the story element easiest to manage, and even the B classes will attempt certain stories quite successfully. Passages that lend themselves to re-writing are:

The Good Samaritan
The Wedding in Cana of Galilee
The Prodigal Son
The Feeding of the Five Thousand
Christ's entry into Jerusalem

The older A Stream pupils might attempt to re-write reflective passages, *e.g.* the Sermon on the Mount, but it is a very difficult exercise, and beyond the ability of all except the brightest children.

Children's Comments

Even with the best of training, children have to take so much for granted that the chance to develop a critical sense is small. Their minds tend to become swamped with facts. In most subjects this is not a vital matter, because the teacher gives the children only accepted facts. Thus a child who is taught that $2 \times 2 = 4$, that London is the capital of England, or that copper is a good conductor of electricity, will not find as he grows older that he has to exchange what he has learnt for something else. The position in the case of Religious Knowledge is not the same, various interpretations being given by people to the same "facts," and if the teacher is too dogmatic and leaves no room for the pupil's free play of thought, that pupil may find as he grows older that what he has regarded as a universal truth is denied by many of his contemporaries. Miracles, for example, are capable of various interpretations, and as many of these as possible should be placed before the children and their comments invited. Healing miracles are regarded by some people as having a natural explanation, and by others as unquestionable acts of Divine intervention. If the children question the teacher both these views should be laid before them and their comments invited.

Teachers are still held somewhat in awe by their scholars, and this is not altogether a bad thing, but it does sometimes prevent children from being as frank as they would like, and criticism is often stifled because the scholar feels that he is criticising the teacher. For this reason children's written comments are franker than their oral ones made in front of the class or even privately to the teacher. If written comments are carefully reviewed by the teacher, he will gather where the children's difficulties lie, and sometimes where his own teaching is at fault. The boy who, commenting on the story of the Resurrection, said, "I can't believe that Mary saw an angel, because we don't see them nowadays," was obviously genuinely puzzled and deserving of the teacher's sympathetic help.

CHILDREN'S QUESTIONS

In written as in oral lessons every opportunity should be given for the children to ask questions. Unfortunately a teacher's time is fully occupied with marking, games, and milk and meal distribution, so that little time is available for discussions with individual children. If children are encouraged to write questions in their notebooks much of the teacher's time will be saved, for he will find that the same problem puzzles a whole group, for whom, therefore, one answer will suffice.

During oral lessons a child who is genuinely puzzled will often be too shy to ask questions either because he is afraid of the class laughing or (as one boy expressed it) because he does not want to show his ignorance. Other children feel that to question any of Our Lord's acts or words may be regarded as irreverent and deserving of admonition. When they know they can hand in a written question this fear is often overcome. The attitude of the teacher is thus enormously important.

Looking through children's questions is a humiliating experience for a teacher who has prided himself on giving a good lesson, for they are not unlikely to show complete failure to grasp its purpose. This is an opportunity for the earnest teacher to revise his method of presentation.

Oral replies may be given, whether to the whole class, to groups, or to individual children ; but on occasion the teacher might instead suggest further investigation by the pupil concerned. A boy of fourteen asked, " Are there such things as angels ? " The best method of dealing with this lad (who was fourteen and intelligent) would be to ask him to look up in his Bible with the help of a concordance the various references to " angels," and then to ask the question again.

The following are some questions asked by boys of a Third Form. (They were free to ask any question at any time.)

(1) Is there such a thing as heaven ?

(2) What help can prayers be in later life ?

(3) What happens when you die ?

(4) Can Hitler be a Christian after all the human beings he has had put to death?

(5) Are there any indications in the Bible that Jesus will return to earth?

(6) Does God speak?

(7) Is prayer the only method of conveying a message to God?

(8) Who is God, and what is He?

(9) Why is there Satan if God is all-powerful, or isn't there such a person as Satan?

(10) Why was God a jealous God?

(11) Who really wrote the Commandments?

(12) Why does the priest recite prayers to a man about to be hanged?

(13) Why are we taught so much scripture? What good is it?

(14) Why do we have harvest festivals when there is a bad harvest?

(15) How is it that in olden days people lived to the age of 600 years and more?

(16) We are taught that God knows everything. Why does He send us on the earth if He knows what we are going to do and say?

(17) Was Jesus God in human form?

(18) Which John was it that wrote the Gospel of St. John?

Perfect teaching based on an ideal syllabus would have provided answers to most of these questions during the course, and they should not have needed answering at the end; yet this class was in the hands of an expert teacher who is outstanding in technical ability, theological knowledge, and his splendid influence over boys. This being the case, it shows how essential it is that teachers less expert should encourage children's questions.

Knowing the boys, the teacher and headmaster are in a position to handle individual cases in the best way:

No. (2) was asked by an excellent type of boy who had been compelled by his parents to attend church at least twice each Sunday. He said quite frankly that he did not like going, and that though he always said his prayers at night it was to "please my mother"; what he really wanted to be was a "good sport." Possessed of this information, the teacher was able to give the boy wise counsel.

No. (7) came from a boy whose father was a prisoner of war. His mother said that there was a strong bond of affection between father and son, the boy praying every night for his father. The teacher's advice was welcomed.

No. (13) came from a boy who was thoroughly spoilt at home. His parents were nominal Roman Catholics, and the question was asked not so much because he doubted the value of scripture lessons as because his interest not having been aroused he resented extra work. He was less intelligent than the rest of the Form, and had probably been unable to follow the class discussions. Probably a B Stream boy misplaced in a good A Form, and needing either special encouragement or transferring to a B Form.

The attention of those teachers who are dubious about encouraging comments on biblical matters, and maintain that children should be taught the Bible as it stands, unquestioningly, is drawn to questions 9, 10, 14, 15, 16, and 18. If these questions go unanswered a great disservice will be done to the children, for it is unlikely that they will ask them again when they grow older except in the company of people as ill-informed as themselves. Teachers have a great responsibility; they must rouse in their children the urge to ask these questions, and be prepared to supply the answers either from their own experience or by reference to those more expert than themselves. Naturally the answers will not always satisfy the children, but it is through intelligent questioning of things that puzzle them that children realize the truth and do not feel thwarted. Obviously

the seeds of doubt are there, and it is better that children should be given means to resolve their doubts, than that they should leave school feeling that there is no solution to them.

Collecting Pictures, Diagrams, etc.

There is a surprising number of biblical pictures, diagrams, and maps lying about in attics and store cupboards. Unfortunately many of them are not good either as works of art or as accurate portrayals of Bible settings, and the maps too often lack clearness through an excess of detail. Yet these considerations should not deter the teacher from asking the children to collect such helps; for they can be led to detect inaccuracies, and later on to distinguish between pictures that are inaccurate or artistically poor and those that have genuine illustrative or artistic value.

The lower classes, whether of A, B, or C Stream, might be encouraged to bring in any pictures that they can collect, to discuss them, and then to mount the most suitable in their books or on wall sheets. With the C Stream this collecting practice may be continued throughout school life, for the children do not appear to lose their zest for it; and though a critical power may not develop, power of observation will be strengthened by this type of work.

The B Stream pupils should develop some critical power, and the A Stream still more. Care must be taken that criticism does not become too cheap, and the teacher should himself hesitate to criticize any picture or map in too wholesale terms. In one school, when a most unsatisfactory picture, which was æsthetically bad, wrong in sentiment, and unsound in conception, was replaced by a sound modern picture, old scholars frequently expressed surprise and regret that a picture they had valued so much in their schooldays had been removed. Before criticizing any picture, therefore, the teacher should make careful inquiries about its history lest he offend people who value it. Possibly the best way would be to allow the class access to a similar picture but of better type, and invite them to say which they prefer. As the training progresses the

pupils should be capable of detecting unsatisfactory pictures for themselves. When they reach the upper forms, the A Stream children will find the number of first-class maps and pictures available is very small, but by that time they should themselves be able to produce most of those they need.

The sources of material for collecting will vary with different children, as well as the keenness to undertake the work. Individual children or groups who are keenly interested should receive full encouragement to go ahead, particularly in B and C classes. Stamp-collecting invariably leads to "swopping," and there is no reason why the collecting of pictures and maps should not also lead to it. Class discussion might lead to arrangements whereby individuals or groups would make collections of various types of pictures, *e.g.* Bible Houses, Bible Animals, etc. Every pupil would bring pictures to school and exchange unsuitable ones with an individual or group desiring them. Scarcity of suitable material makes this almost impossible in the higher A classes, but it might be possible for a collection of Old Masters to be built up, as these are readily available. Collections of this sort are of inestimable value in a school, particularly if mounted.

Children may themselves suggest collections that they would care to make, and these with tactful supervision by the teacher should be encouraged.

One word of warning is necessary about picture collection, namely, that it should have a definite aim ; the pictures should illustrate lessons that have been given, or concern a stated topic. The collection should be pasted into books or mounted on wall sheets for use during lesson time. Nothing is worse than to see classroom walls plastered with pictures that are badly mounted, never used, and without appeal to the children. When pictures are no longer required for reference they should be removed from the walls, and either stored for a future occasion or discarded.

Models

Some firms supply cardboard models which only require a few spots of paste to be quickly assembled. Educationally they

are not of much value, and it is questionable if the children will take more than a passing interest in them. Preferably the children should make their own models, even if these are crude and immature. The making of simple models will be thoroughly enjoyed by the younger C children, particularly if the best specimens are used for class demonstrations. Subjects for modelling are innumerable, and if the lesson is to be of research type the children might be asked to assemble their models from verbal descriptions or illustrations only. The media used will vary with the age of the children and the particular crafts taught in the school, but the following might be available :

Thin plywood or cardboard for houses or cut-out figures
Soft woods for carving
Clay or plasticine for modelling

Younger girls like dressing dolls, and even the older girls do not always look on this with disdain. Dressed dolls of Bible figures would give children a much better idea of costume than any picture, and there would be ample scope for research in discovering the designs of costumes and the colours of the materials used. The work would have still more educational value if the doll figures, of wood or papier mâché, were themselves made in the school, and the heads carved and coloured.

Sand trays are a common feature of Infant Schools, and much more use of them could be made with the C and B classes of Senior Schools. Village sets, physical relief, and Bible scenes could be worked out on them. Teachers contemplating this work should borrow a copy of an army text-book on sand tables as used for tactical exercises, so as to get advice on the use of coloured powders for various types of ground, the choice of materials for rivers, trees, and houses, and the best methods of construction. Scenes assembled in this way can be most realistic, particularly if human figures are set in place.

Because of the time taken in their production permanent models are not always best, for children quickly lose interest in the making of them, and the completion of the task becomes irksome. In their enthusiasm teachers sometimes decide to

make permanent models, which they fondly hope will be continually used for class demonstration. To be really effective these must be large in size, raising a difficult problem of storage. Smaller models which can be passed round the class or viewed by small groups are easier to store, but rapidly lose their appeal. Museum shelves and tops of store cupboards form the graveyards of countless such models.

If sand models are constructed individual children might suggest figures or other contributory items that they would like to offer and are prepared to make in their own time. Girls might thus provide dresses for dolls, or at least single garments. One useful medium in which children can work at home is Balsa wood (with its various substitutes) which is used in the construction of model aircraft and is quite easily worked. Fretwork cut-outs provide a purposeful job for boys in their leisure moments.

It may appear from the foregoing that too much is expected of the children, but the following points should be taken into account :

(*a*) In the Senior School far more written work is attempted than in the Junior School, and it might be that three or four consecutive lessons could be devoted to the written or other individual work.

(*b*) Teachers would adopt only a selection of the above suggestions, namely those suited to and possible in their particular circumstances.

(*c*) A number of the suggestions refer only to spare moments when children have little to do and are usually only too pleased to undertake voluntary purposeful work.

The use by each child of two exercise books, a new and a filled one, as suggested earlier in the chapter, will effect an economy in stationery, a serious consideration in war-time. Extra work undertaken by the children can be done on scraps of paper, and later pasted into the scrap-book.

Improved teaching methods, making for more interesting lessons and more effective learning, are being applied to many subjects of the school curriculum, perhaps least rapidly to

Religious Knowledge. The reasons are obvious : inadequate facilities for the training of teachers, lack of suitable equipment, inconvenient time-tables. Teachers given opportunities for training, and supplied with suitable books and illustrative material, could work a revolution in the teaching of the subject, especially if organized research were conducted into the whole field, and the results were made available to them.

Recommended Books

Bible Picture Books (Nelson)

Bible Wall Pictures (Nelson)

Biblical Models and How to Make them. M. Evans. (National Society)

Practical Books : *Africa.* W. Wan. *China.* W. Wan. *India.* W. Wan. (Edinburgh House Press)

Scholar's Self Teaching Guides. (National Society)

Chapter XI

TEACHING AIDS

Books

The Bible is usually the only book available for use in Religious Instruction periods, and this in the Authorized or Revised Version, which is beyond the grasp of the majority of children. Fortunately there are now published several re-tellings which, though not ideal, do assist in preparing the child to read the standard versions. When suitable " Bibles " are produced for C Stream children the teacher's task will be to persuade Education Authorities of the urgent need for a supply.

To teach Religious Instruction satisfactorily a plentiful supply of other books is desirable, particularly for the more intelligent children, who should be doing a good deal of private study. Such children require reference books not only for class work but for finding answers to their personal questions on the Bible.

Every school should have available a simple but authoritative Bible commentary. Ideally every child in the A classes should have his own copy, but teachers would be well pleased if even a few copies were available for the whole school. Some children who have a liking for a particular subject will gladly undertake additional work in their own time ; boys interested in electricity will build models of dynamos or electric motors, or write little books on such subjects as aeroplanes, castles, or moths. Religious Instruction in the hands of a keen teacher will gain a similar response ; and for the enterprising child there should be not only a standard commentary and concordance, but other advanced books.

Some commentaries include short historical and geographical surveys of Palestine and the neighbouring countries. These might be thought desirable in a commentary intended for children ; but practical considerations forbid. The books

will be required for several classes, usually at the same time —for Religious Instruction is usually taken simultaneously throughout a school. As the book outlay per child is extremely limited, the less expensive individual books are the better, so that a large number may be available. Thus if separate geographies, histories, and commentaries are bought, two or three classes can be using sets at the same time.

Although simple, the histories and geographies should be authoritative, so that the children will not have anything to unlearn at a later date; and they should contain copious illustrations and maps. They should be specially and attractively written, not merely compiled from standard works, and be pleasant to look at and durable to handle.

A series of what might be called Bible "novels" has appeared, consisting of stories of adventure whose scene is laid in the Bible period. The reading of sound historical novels may play a part in History teaching, and there is no reason why the reading of novels with a Bible setting and including biblical characters should not play a part in Religious Instruction. Those who have read Don Byrnes' *Brother Saul* will realize how a competent author can throw fresh light on a biblical character.

Biographies, too, have a special value. Though many excellent small biographies are published, most of them are not strongly enough bound for general school use. The stories of the Christian heroes are so absorbing that it is amazing more use of them is not made in schools. The biographies selected should have attractive titles and wrappers. Their style should be natural, rapid, and direct. Formality, pompousness, and artificiality of any kind make books unreadable for most children. One must be a realist in this matter, and an examination of children's reading will show that in spite of the efforts of English experts the books children prefer, in their leisure moments, are definitely low-brow. It is not suggested that biographies of Christian heroes should be written in Western-thriller English, but that all pretentiousness should be avoided. Included in this "interest" type of reading might be books telling the stories of the great Missionary Societies.

There will be required, too, books, very simply written, dealing with the history of the Church from the time of the Apostles to the present day.

It is quite probable that the word "utopian" has been on the lips of the reader while going through this book, and never more so than during the preceding few pages. Reflection will show, however, that the supply of books asked for is merely that which is already available for the teaching of other subjects. Adequate Religious Education is in the forefront of present educational needs, and teachers have the right to demand that they be provided with proper tools.

The present position may be summed up as follows :

Most Schools

The Authorized or Revised Version for each scholar

Some Schools

The Authorized or Revised Version
A book of Biblical extracts

A Few Schools

The Authorized or Revised Version
A book of Biblical extracts
A selection of reference books (fairly advanced) and biographies

The objective for the future may be put as :

The Attainable with Adequate Funds

Authorized or Revised Version (A and B Streams)
A book of Biblical extracts (A, B, and C Streams)
A modern version, *e.g.* Basic English (B and C Streams)
A Bible commentary (only " advanced " type available)
A Bible concordance (only " advanced " type available)
Biblical atlas (suitable editions published)
A history of the Church (some suitable for A Stream published)
Stories of the Missionary Societies (often dull)
Biographies (good cheap editions available but sometimes badly bound)

The Ideal

Authorized or Revised Version (A and B Streams)
A book of biblical extracts (A, B, and C Streams)
Modern versions, including Basic English (B and C Streams)
The Bible in simple story form together with very simple extracts (C Stream)
Bible commentary for boys and girls (A and B Streams)
Bible concordance (A Stream)
Standard Bible commentary (A Stream)
The historical background of the Bible for boys and girls (A and B Streams)
The geographical background of the Bible for boys and girls (A and B Streams)
The history of the Church for boys and girls (A and B Streams)
Biographies of all types, graded in difficulty (A, B, and C Streams)
Novels with a biblical background, graded in difficulty (A, B, and C Streams)

Maps

In Religious Instruction far too little use is made of maps. Maps tell an exciting story if they are properly interpreted and children know how to use them. Ideally each child should possess a biblical atlas ; but meanwhile the difficulty of supply can be overcome by the use of large wall maps, individual cyclostyled maps, or maps drawn by the children themselves.

A sound plan is to have a series of large blank maps on which details are entered as the lessons proceed. To children, a map showing Paul's journeys is not of outstanding interest, but they enjoy filling in the route for themselves, and entering the names of the places visited. Similarly, sumptuously coloured contour maps of Palestine tend to repel children, through savouring too much of formal Geography lessons. On all accounts, then, blank maps on which the features can be quickly entered are the best to use.

Such maps need not be drawn on paper; for when they are, the temptation arises to preserve them, fully entered, for use in later lessons. A useful scheme adopted in one school is the provision of large ply-wood templates of maps commonly in request, on a scale clearly visible to the whole class. Before the lesson starts, all that is needed is to place the template on the blackboard, and to draw round the edges with chalk.

The question may be asked, What maps are necessary in the teaching of Religious Knowledge? Much will depend on the syllabus in use, but the following may be regarded as a minimum requirement for children covering the full Senior School course:

Map showing the position of the various countries alluded to in the Old Testament, *e.g.* Assyria, Babylon
Map showing the position of Palestine in relation to:
(*a*) the Mediterranean region; (*b*) the rest of the world
Map of the Mediterranean region
Physical and political maps of Palestine
Map of the Eastern Mediterranean region, with particular reference to St. Paul's journeys

Care must be taken that the children are not bored by the inclusion of too much detail, and are not set to learn by heart long lists of mountains, rivers, and towns.

At the same time there is a place for relevant subsidiary matters. A teacher dealing with St. Paul's missionary journeys would naturally use the map of the Eastern Mediterranean to mark out the routes, but also:

(*a*) by putting in the Roman roads he would show the reason for St. Paul's *choice* of routes, and

(*b*) by showing the location of mountains and plains he would clarify the times taken for the various stages of the journeys.

Illustrations

Simplicity and clearness are requisites of illustrations as well as of maps. Many publishers still provide illustrations

that are too small for class use. Teachers would be well advised before using an illustration to pin it on the blackboard, retire to the back of the classroom, and make sure that it can be clearly seen from that position. To question the children is not always satisfactory, for, out of a mistaken idea of deference, they will often reply that they can see the illustration clearly when in fact they cannot do so. Illustrations that do not pass the test should be rigorously excluded from class use.

Inexperienced teachers are apt to make the mistake of not giving the children sufficient time to examine a picture properly, and of assuming that the children will, without direction on the teacher's part, observe the particular points that are wanted in the lesson. It is disconcerting for a teacher who has displayed a picture of nomadic life to be told, when he asks for comments, that the shadows are purple when they ought to be black, or other irrelevancies. Co-operation between specialist teachers is vitally important, and the Art specialist can be of immense assistance by training children to look at pictures not only for their artistic quality, but also for their detailed content. So that there shall be no mistake the teacher, particularly with the younger children, should state definitely what idea the picture is intended to convey, and what particular aspects they are to observe. Thus he might say : " This is a picture of an Eastern house. I want you to notice the type of roof and window, the colour of the masonry, and any other points in which it differs from our houses. Don't trouble about the trees and figures in the picture ; we will deal with those another time." Valuable class discussion is often the result of such guided observation ; and as experience grows the amount of guidance will proportionately decrease.

Illustrations that are too small for class use may be used by groups or individuals, and kept in the scrapbooks as previously recommended. English lessons often include the answering of questions based on pictures, and there is no reason why this method should not be adopted in Religious Instruction periods.

Simplicity of line is so important that it is very unwise to

buy pictures without first seeing them, for many so-called teaching pictures are merely crude reproductions of Victorian lithographs. Linked with simplicity of line is that of colour. Recently produced pictures show this in a marked degree, their colours are simple but so aptly chosen that they at once convey the effect of harsh sunlight, windswept desert, or green oasis. Pictures of this kind are worth a lengthy search.

Most valuable of illustrations in practice are the teacher's chalk sketches on the blackboard, and they are easily produced, developing with the lesson itself. Dwellings, costumes, settings, etc., are portrayed with a few strokes, and by reason of their simplicity and exact relevance may in teaching value surpass the most expensive printed pictures. For teachers feeling they have not the requisite drawing skill, Canon Braley in *The Teaching of Religion* gives useful hints.

Whether illustrations should attempt to portray the actual biblical scene is a controversial question ; certainly the cheap fanciful portrayals found in many Bibles are harmful. Teachers will find that though there is a scarcity of reliable illustrations of complete biblical scenes, there are plenty of good pictures available of period settings or their constituent items—geographical, domestic, or social. Lessons illustrated with pictures of this type will not fail through lack of representation of complete incidents ; rather will the pupils have their imagination stimulated, as they will have before them the material from which to build their own mental pictures.

Should the teacher use illustrations of biblical scenes, care should be taken to ensure their period accuracy. If the children are to learn the historical, geographical, and social background of the Bible narrative it would be foolish to use illustrations showing features conflicting with what they will be taught later. Although many classical reproductions of biblical episodes, such as Leonardo da Vinci's painting of the Last Supper, have undoubted teaching value, they will on this account need to be used with great discretion, particularly with the younger children.

Representations of historical personages are likely to be unsatisfactory, particularly when no contemporary portrait is

extant. Children judge people largely from their personal appearance, and it is unfortunate when they are disappointed in their biblical hero because they have seen an insipid or unpalatable portrait of him. Children, particularly boys, like to think of Jesus as a very spirited figure, but unfortunately many portraits of Him suggest the reverse. Few pictures portray Our Lord with a smile on His face, which from the children's point of view is regrettable.

Reproductions of the Old Masters have their place in schools, but it is questionable if it is as illustrations for Bible stories. The teachers of Art and of Religious Knowledge need to get together when constructing their schemes in regard to matters of complementary interest. Thus the Old Masters reproductions may exert an influence that contributes to religious experience, and an influence to which some older children are responsive. The content and spirit belong to Religious Instruction, yet the technique belongs to Art—and it is not a technique of period accuracy. New school buildings give an opportunity for decoration with reproductions of great religious pictures ; and modern artists like Stanley Spencer might well be included. But such reproductions should not be regarded as accurate illustrations. It is their inspirational, not their representational, function that matters.

Visual Aids

Children seeing so few lantern slides to-day are apt to regard them as a pleasing change from the commoner visual aids. Many schools are now equipped with darkened room and projection equipment, so that they have no practical difficulty. Even in schools that do not possess a means of darkening the windows it is possible to obtain a satisfactory projection just big enough for class purposes if the screen is placed in the darkest part of the room, and direct sunlight is shut off by an opaque canopy. An alternative method is to direct the projection on to an angularly set mirror, which reflects it on to the back of a translucent screen. (See *Visual Aids*, a pamphlet issued by the Board of Education.)

The same principle should be observed in the selection of slides as in that of illustrations, and there are the same pitfalls. Firms supplying lantern slides, and the chief missionary and religious societies, now issue a wide range of titles, so that teachers should easily find whatever illustrations they need. The session might even open with a series of lantern shows, for example, "The Lands of the Bible," "The People of the Bible," and "Scenes from Bible Lands," covering the whole of the geographical, historical, and social background required for the year's syllabus. These shows might be given each session, but with different sets of slides; or other topics might be treated, for example, "The Lives of Modern Christian Heroes."

Cinema projectors are becoming more and more popular in schools, but their use tends to be confined to a small group of subjects of which Religious Instruction is not one. Although teachers of Religious Instruction are becoming conscious of the value of films as an additional teaching aid there has been little attempt as yet to produce appropriate films. Religious films are advertised for school use, but most are unsatisfactory, being merely re-issues of old silent films. Whether the actual Bible scenes should be represented is again a controversial matter, but films showing particular aspects of Palestinian life would be useful. Religious films of teaching value do exist, but it is desirable for the teacher to see films through before deciding on adoption. Shortage of films will persist until a wider demand encourages supply. Meantime much of the illustrative matter required for teaching purposes may be found in geographical films already produced. The geography teacher usually orders films several weeks in advance and reads up the printed summaries provided by the hiring firms. The teacher responsible for Religious Instruction might well do the same, and tell the class before the lesson which parts of the films are relevant to his needs; for example, before a film showing an oasis the teacher would point out that the modern nomad figures are similar in dress and customs to those of the days of Abraham. Films dealing generally with life in Eastern lands might be used in both Geography and Religious Instruction periods.

The function of the film in Religious Instruction is not yet clear, but it would appear to be to provide details of settings —historical, geographical, and social ; at any rate until more suitable historical films are produced. Schools could also utilize films giving shots of the daily life of Eastern peoples or of the geographical features of the Holy Land, as an introduction to this section of Religious Instruction or as an aid to revision.

Sources of Information

(1) *Books, Illustrations, etc.* Advice may be obtained from :

The Institute of Christian Education, 49 Gordon Square, London, W.C.1. (The Institute issues classified and annotated book lists, and answers individual queries.)

The School Library Association. (This issues *A List of Books on Scripture Subjects suitable for School Libraries.*)

In prospectus form from :

Church of England Sunday School Institute, 13 Serjeant's Inn, Fleet Street, London, E.C.4

National Adult School Union, 30 Bloomsbury Street, London, W.C.1

National Society's Depository, 19 Great Peter Street, Westminster, London, S.W.1

National Sunday School Union, 57–59 Ludgate Hill, London, E.C.4

Religious Tract Society, 65 St. Paul's Churchyard, London, E.C.4

Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, Northumberland Avenue, London, W.C.2

Student Christian Movement, 32 Russell Square, London, W.C.1

Teachers and Taught, 4 Fleet Lane, London, E.C.4

United Council for Missionary Education (Edinburgh House Press), 2 Eaton Gate, London, S.W.1

(2) *Pictures and Maps.* Particulars may be obtained from :

National Sunday School Union
    Wall Pictures. 30 × 20 in. About 900 subjects

Thomas Nelson & Sons Ltd.
    Wall Pictures. 32 × 23 in. 500 pictures

George Philip & Sons Ltd.
    Wall Atlas of Bible Lands. Eight maps 46 × 36 in.

(3) *Films.* Information may be obtained from :

The Secretary, The Cinema Christian Council, 59 New Oxford Street, London, W.C.1

The Secretary, The Film Institute, 4 Great Russell Street, London, W.C.1

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